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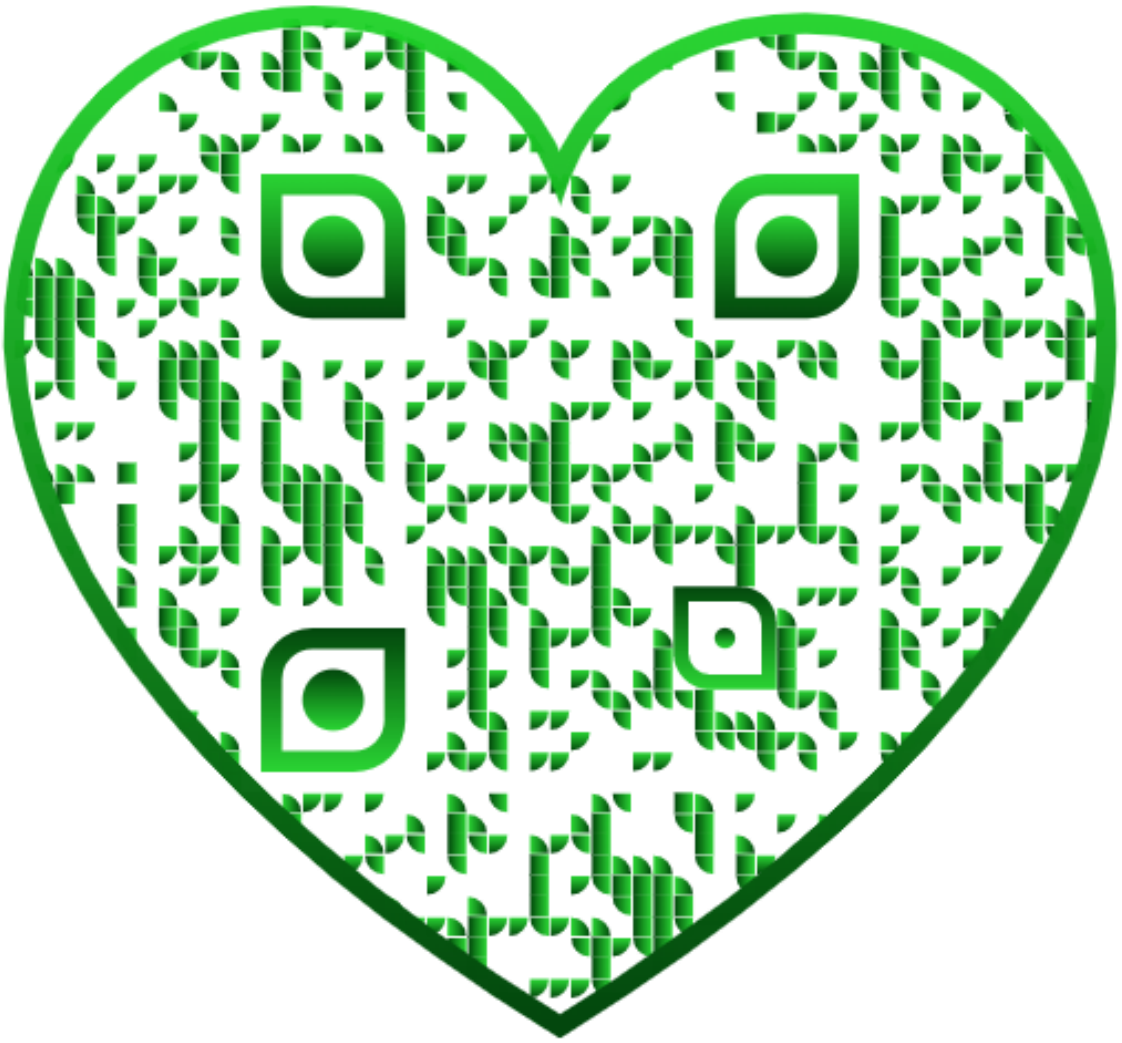

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contents

ISSUE 142, AUGUST 2023

Features

Ronnie Lane 30
From stadiums to circus tents: Ronnie quits The Faces

Tribal Rites 32
How soul, rock and jazz fed into the beginnings of disco

Wreckless Eric 40
From teenage punk firebrand to mature roots thinker, Eric Goulden speaks

The Bees 44
The Isle Of Wight collective that mixed psych, indie and world music, 20 years on

The Four King Cousins 50
Four girls' adventures in '60s Hollywood and their accidental soft-pop classic

Little Richard 62
Freedom Blues: the rock 'n' roll bard's tempestuous journey into the '70s

Regulars

Thoughts & Words 6
Your letters, tweets and emails

Shindiggin' 8
What's hot on the *Shindig!* turntable

Subscribers' Prize Draw 9
Subscribe now and you could win the mammoth Hawkwind *Space Ritual* box set

It's A Happening Thing 10
Jonathan Wilson, Papernut Cambridge, Beachwood Sparks, Belbury Poly, Lady Apple Tree, Albert, Technicolor Noir, Norman Blake, Bowes Road Band, Big Potato Records

Family Album 24
Tucker Zimmerman's *Over Here In Europe*

Back To Back 26
Badfinger and We All Together's 'Carry On Till Tomorrow'

Deep Cuts 28
Re-interpretations of The Four Seasons' '60s sides

20 Questions 34
Mark Volman discusses The Turtles, Flo & Eddie, Zappa, Bolan faith and sobriety

Reviews 70
The best in reissues, new releases, books and live shows

Prize Crossword 94
Win Gal Costa's *Índia* on remastered vinyl

Vinyl Art 96
Claire Hamill's *Stage Door Johnnies*

Vinyl Clicks 98
Brian Alexander Robertson's *Wringing Applause*

Melanie 56
How US folk-rock's hippy queen found solace and a second home in the UK

"There were lots of crazies, but the good crazies, the kind that make life interesting"

welcome

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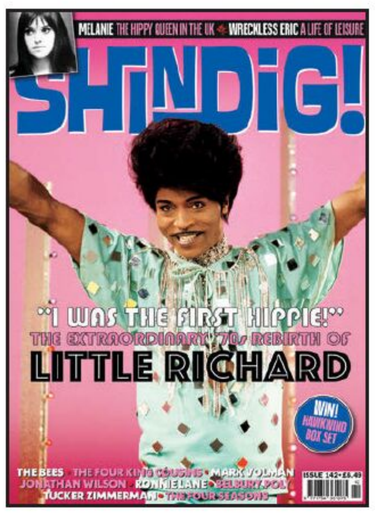

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Hi Shindiggers,

What a nice pink cover, and what an interesting era of Little Richard to focus on, right? Seven issues away from our 150th it's fascinating to read and hear what our audience thinks about *Shindig!* in 2023. The last few issues have seen a return to both '60s and '80s garage, more coverage of '80s and '90s "psych" and, with our last issue, the early days of a huge star.

On our letters page you'll see examples of the conversations we've been having with other readers on Facebook. Please join in via our socials or email me, it's always fantastic to gauge your opinion so that we can tailor-make the magazine for your unique and varied tastes. Indeed, it is hard to please everyone all of the time, but we appear to be doing well with the balance thus far. We write about this stuff because we love it.

From a *bona fide* rock 'n' roll star's ever more flamboyant rebirth, to the heady and mellow '90s stoned vibes of The Bees and '60s one-of-a-kinds The Turtles' Mark Volman, the dawn of disco, the conservative-but-groovy soft-pop of The Four King Cousins, and grown-up punk Wreckless Eric, we've cast the net far and wide featuring artists you're very unlikely to see in any other glossy music monthly.

Do let us know what you think, and whether you agree or disagree with the comments from the fellow 'diggers featured on our letters page. If you *really* want to support us, please subscribe.

Stay cool,

Jon 'Mojo' Mills,
Editor-In-Chief

Shindig! recommend using the hi-fi gear of their media partners and sponsors. Left to right: Pro-Ject X2 turntable (bit.ly/3FzsvhV), Cambridge Audio EVO 150 (bit.ly/3qEUusx), EVO CD (bit.ly/462I6mz), and JBL L82s (bit.ly/3X7m3XA). This is a supreme hassle-free system for vinyl, CD, high-res streaming. We will be working very closely with Cambridge Audio moving forward, so watch this space.

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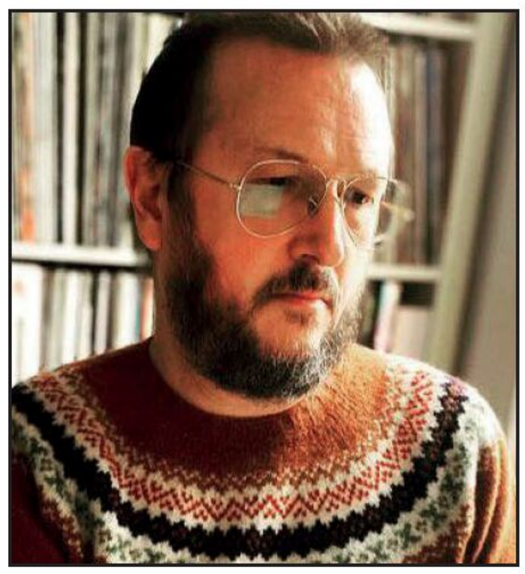

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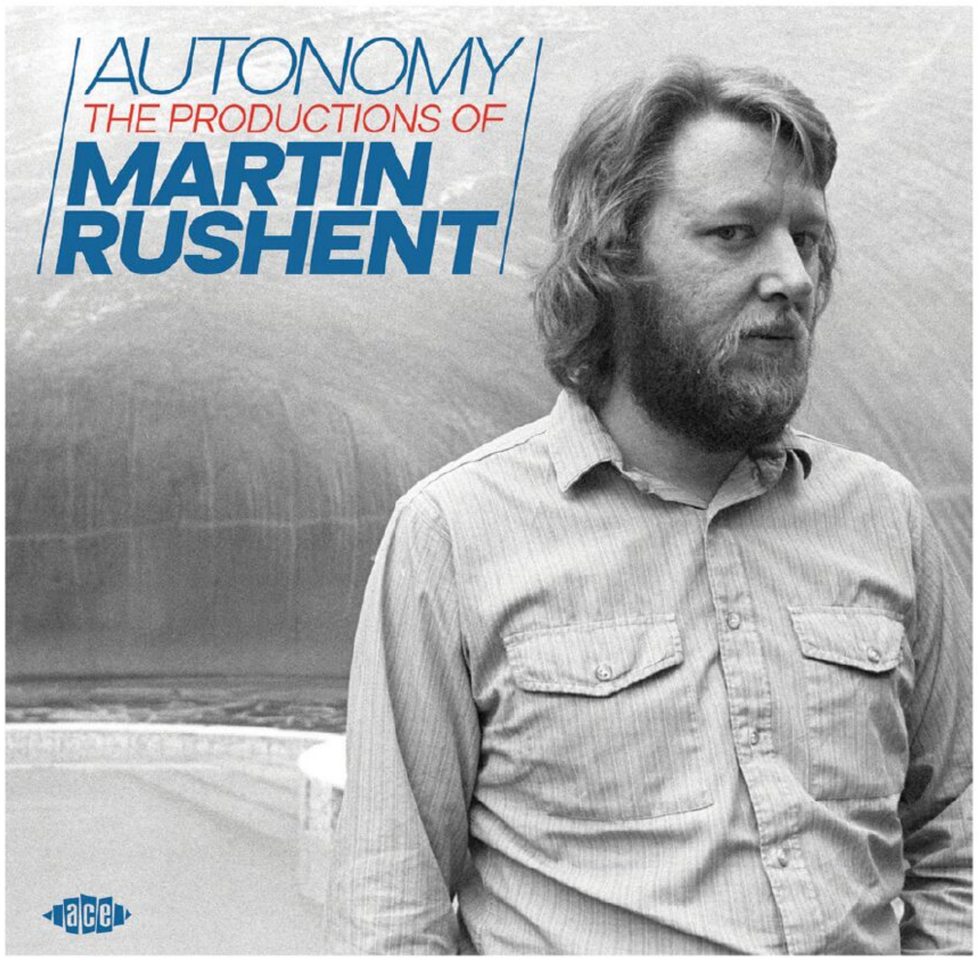
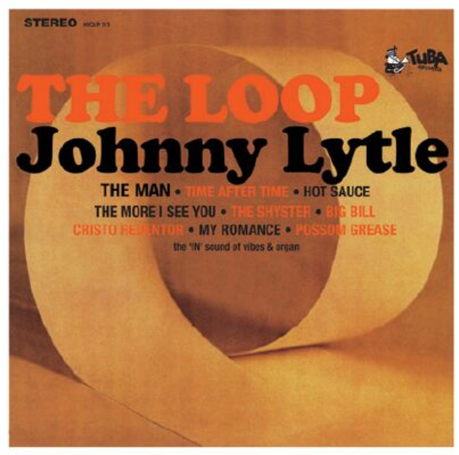


Autonomy
The Productions Of Martin Rushent
CDTOP 1636 (CD)
Martin Rushent cut his teeth on hit records by the likes of the Stranglers and the Buzzcocks before setting up Genetic Sound and sailing into electronic waters where his work with the Human League defined UK synthpop. After that, the hits and cutting-edge productions continued as this collection showcases.

Mighty Baby
Mighty Baby
HIQLP 039 (LP)
Originally released in 1969, the debut album by Mighty Baby is a collectable progressive rock masterpiece. A deluxe gatefold reissue with inner sleeve, liner notes and memorabilia.



Johnny Lytle
The Loop
HIQLP 115 (LP)
Vibes player Johnny Lytle was one of the heroes of the early acid jazz club circuit, with his cuts 'Selim' and 'The Man' being anthems of the scene. This is the album's first legal reissue on vinyl.

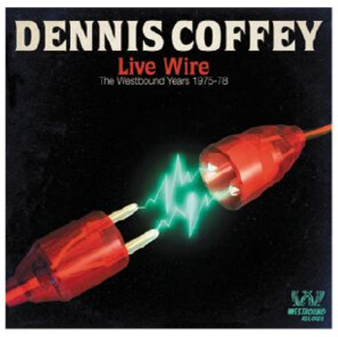
Melvin Sparks
'75
HIQLP 111 (LP)
A return to vinyl for this soul jazz classic, which includes the club classics 'Get Ya Some' and 'Get Down With The Get Down.

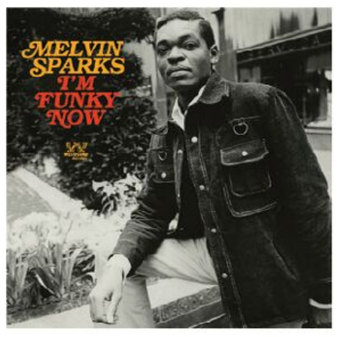
Melvin Sparks
Texas Twister
HIQLP 117 LP
A masterful funky jazz album by one of the godfathers of acid jazz. Produced by Bob Porter, "Texas Twister" was a continuation of Sparks' sought-after work at Prestige.

The Counts
What's Up Front That – Counts
SEW 063 (LP)
This all-time classic from one of the rarest (and best) Detroit funk outfits has been out of print on vinyl for nearly two decades, Ace is proud to reissue it on vinyl.

Hopscotch / Andwella
Look At The Lights Go Up C/W
Hold On To Your Mind
NW 515 (7")
The latest 45 on Bob Stanley's Measured Mile label is another double-sided gem, this time picking up on a pair of terrific turn-of-the-70s acts whose original 7" singles are now both hard to find and horribly expensive.

Also available:





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thoughts&words

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A BAD NIGHT

Hi Jon,

Thank you for another splendid issue, I've picked up on a couple of new bands to follow, I love Nick Drake's music and I do enjoy the pieces such as the Deep Cuts with its exploration of the Island Records label. Island Records of course linking in both Nick and Cat Stevens, the latter being the main reason for dropping you a line.

I really enjoyed that piece as I have always been a fan of Cat's Deram releases of the '60s, and it's good to see Cat/Yusuf appreciating his material from that period, particularly 'Bad Night', which is one of my favourite records of the summer of '67, a period littered with classics. I loved the ambition, the psychedelic tinged soundscape of Mike Hurst's production. To my mind it was one of those singles of '67 that should have been a much bigger hit than it was, the other primary examples being The Hollies' 'King Mida In Reverse' (with which it shares a certain vibe) and The Who's 'I Can See For Miles'.

There was so much great psychedelic music released that year, but the charts were often dominated by MOR balladeers whose records these days crop up regularly in the charity bins!

Anyway, another fascinating edition and a spot on review of the Star Collector album to boot.

All the Best,

Roger Nicholls

Thanks Roger, it's always good to know we hit the right spot for you.

BATTLE OF THE GARAGES

Hi Jon,

It was with great joy that I turned to pages 29 and 30 of *Shindig!* #140. Rarely have I seen so many records that I have in my collection! However, I have to admit that I missed two of the early neo-garage bands on the pages. In America, The Droogs released the record 'He's Waitin'' as early as 1973 (which unfortunately I don't have in my collection). They were certainly inspired by the *Nuggets*, compiled in '72!

The Sonics are missing on that masterpiece (unfortunately!), but he Swedish forefathers of the neo-garage scene, The Nomads, also released a Sonics cover in '81 as their first 7", 'Psycho', which I missed, too!

Of course, other bands covered the garage song 'You're Gonna Miss Me' very early on, like The Barracudas or Radio Birdman. The origins of this scene actually lay at the end of the '70s. I won't forget when I received the second 7" of Radiators From Space and found the garage classic 'Psychotic Reaction' was on the B-side!

So *Nuggets* already influenced some bands in the mid/late '70s.

Since you want to deal with the '80s again, extensively, I'm particularly looking forward to the articles about the Swedish bands such as Shoutless, Wayward Souls and Maryland Cookies!

Now for two small comments on the covers shown. Voxx never had the Plan 9 cover! Suzy was absolutely flabbergasted when I asked her about it! It seems someone from the band made some private sleeves. I acquired my copy from an American who received this version from the band at a concert!

The Stomach Mouths cover is from the second pressing. The cover of the first pressing is the band cover, with five or four different colourings of the bass drum. However, the records that I got were all black, not marbled. As far as I know Jens Lindberg was not a member of Stomach Mouths at the time the 7" was recorded!! He wasn't there until the late '80s!

All the best from Germany,

Detlef Voge

Thanks Detlef, I can very much tell that you dig this stuff. It's where the mag started, so it's important to us.

NEGATIVE VIBES

Hi Jon,

I think you will find that Henry Diltz's pal in visits to Neil Young (issue #141) was sleeve designer Gary Burden, rather than famed vibes-player Gary Burton.

That said, it's taken me 50 years to realise the punning significance of the credit on Neil's albums that read 'Gary Burdon/R Twerk'...

Yours,

Michael Heatley

Yes indeed. How very embarrassing. Thanks for the clarification.

A CONFESSION

Hi Jon,

Thanks for the fascinating feature on Alex Harvey. Just over 50 years ago I was a callow, teenage cub reporter on our local newspaper and, having blagged my way to contributing to what passed as a "Youth Page" I was dispatched to review a gig by The Sensational Alex Harvey Band when they visited our genteel, Yorkshire retirement town as part of a tour supporting the brilliant *Next* album. They were fantastic. I remember Harvey had a whip and there was lots of dry ice.

After the gig, I went back stage and visited their dressing

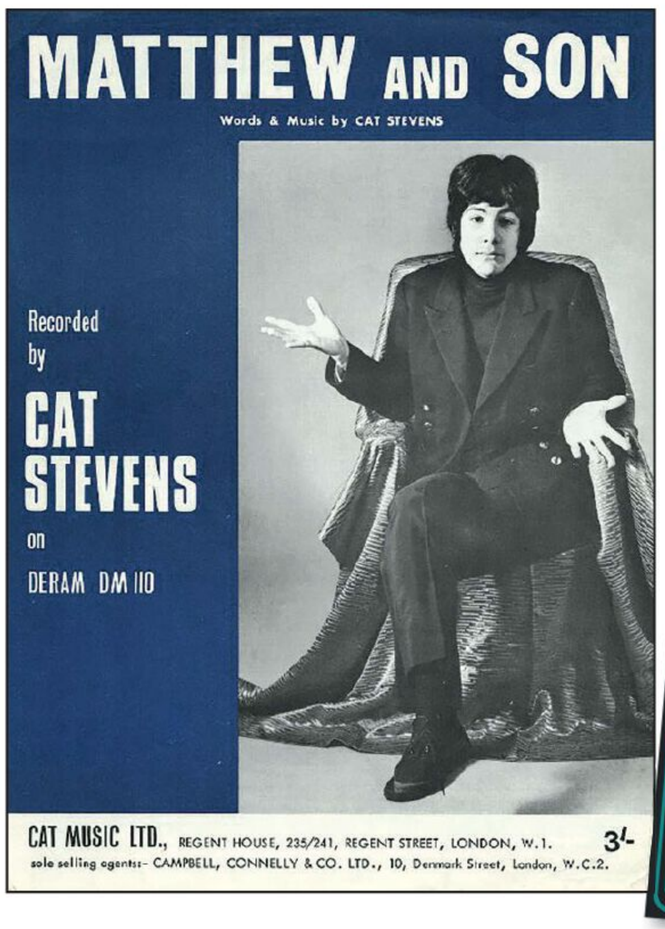
STAR LETTER

NO TEA FOR ME

Hi Jon,

Congratulations on a fine Cat Stevens article and interview which I read whilst simultaneously watching his recent festival appearance down in England.

Something I always enjoy doing when reading an article or book about an artist, a period or a genre is to immerse myself in them, to listen to what I am reading about, and I thoroughly recommend it to everyone as it can enhance the experience of both (although I may struggle when reading Bob Stanley's new book – I find The Bee Gees can be a bit trying after a song or two, no matter which period it's from!).



Cat Stevens is an artist who was never really my bag, my mum had an album that was played a lot in the mid-70s in our house, his *Greatest Hits*, but it didn't do anything for me except for the masterpiece that is 'Mathew And Son', which I still would never tire of hearing. (I presume that some royalties from 'Mad World' by Tears For Fears went his way?)

A few other artists from the late '60s/early '70s similarly leave me cold bar one or two classics which I love to death (Donovan's 'Hey Gyp' and 'Close To You' by The Carpenters immediately spring to mind).

Reading the article was a learning experience and as a result I have begun reinvestigating and thoroughly enjoying his early catalogue. The first of the two Deram albums, in particular, is fantastic, however *Tea For The Tillerman* remains a step too far for me. This shouldn't have surprised me as I seem to enjoy most things I hear on Deram.

Anyway, a great article and interview with a very grounded man, complemented by a fine Glastonbury performance, so thanks again.

Mark 'The Hibby Mod' Scally

Thank you Mark, and yes, I always listen to our cover stars as I edit the feature. Cat's early years were sublime, and somewhat neglected. It was great to see him perform some of this gear at Glastonbury. Sticking with faith, we're sending you the vinyl comp Jesus People Music Volume 2. *Enjoy.*

room to try and get an interview with Alex Harvey but, after I knocked and entered, wearing my 1973 regulation cub reporter tweed jacket and suede shoes, he and Zal Cleminson, in full post-gig sweating "evil clown" make-up, pinned me to the door, police dog style, sticking their tongues out, shrieking and growling.

It was undoubtedly just a bit of good-natured fun but, for some reason, I was scared out of my wits, opened the dressing room door and scarpered.

As I hurriedly made my way up the corridor, Alex Harvey opened the door and called something to the effect of: "It's okay. You can come back if you like" to which I replied, "Fuck Off."

So much for intrepid, fearless local newspaper reporting, making contacts or "getting the interview" at all costs! Asked the next day by the page editor whether I managed to get an interview, I simply said: "Alex Harvey was too tired."

An ignominious start to my career but fortunately not the only chance I got to interview musicians and review rock music.

Keep up the great work with the very best music magazine on the planet.

Cheers,

Mike Clarke

This may be my favourite letter ever. I really can picture it. Thanks for fezzin' up.

WORKING ON THE COALFACE

Hi Jon,

I love the excellent mix of classic and modern artists covered by your brilliant magazine. I love that you review working musicians and their music. Recent cases in point, Angeline Morrison and Henry Parker. You have requested suggestions for future articles. I'm sure I would not be alone amongst your readership to hear from current gigging artists trying to "make it" in the current music climate about their lives. I'd love to hear what life is like for those dedicated to entertaining us.

As always, keep up the outstanding work.

Love

Phil Meeckiff

FACEBOOK THOUGHTS

We recently asked seasoned readers to let us know what they think of our content. Here are a few of the many responses.

I've been a reader of your mag for a few years now (became a subscriber couple of years back). Had heard of the magazine but found it difficult to find in newsagents initially, but once it became more mainstream became a big fan as it introduced me to artists not generally covered by other music mags. I used to subscribe to *MOJO* and occasionally still purchase that and *Uncut* if they feature a fave artist.

Simon Davies

The first issue I bought was fairly early on... with Julie Driscoll on the cover I believe... like many I loved *MOJO* when it first started, but got tired of the recycling of the same artist... it became the literary equivalent of classic-rock stations with their 10 song playlists... but *Shindig!* really does DIG DEEP. That recent issue that had Aphrodite's Child on the cover, that's what I'm after! I just wish a subscription to the territories (i.e. Canada) wasn't so darn expensive!

I would love to see a major Groundhogs piece, long overdue, and now that McPhee has passed, it should be done.

Dan Lovranski

Last two issues courtesy of all the *Nuggets*/garage-punk related articles. Brilliant stuff. More of the same (and related; some of the SST label era bands would be a good fit to continue that thread) and I will keep buying.

MOJO and *Uncut* are SO predictable.

Rob Hunt

I think the two latest releases has a great balance between now and then! And I was thinking that it would be great If you would do a special about the early '60s heroes like Johnny Kidd & The Pirates, Joe Meek, or Gene Vincent's adventures in UK in the '60s!

Ragnar Sjörén

Great mix at the moment but I'd like a little more coverage of '60s/70s black music – off the top of my head I can think of great articles on Sly & The Family Stone, Curtis Mayfield and Stax Records in previous issues, so more would be great.

Adrian Gent

Appreciate you might be going full circle on the '60s garage-rock scene and I regularly dip into your back catalogue for my fix on this, but always good to see a feature on those bands to remind us all of our roots. I do struggle to get excited by much new recorded music over recent years, but there are still some great live bands.

Lots more soul/Black music features. Gil Scott Heron, Leroy Hutson, Womack, Joe Bataan, Jon Lucien, Terry Callier, Alice Clark, Esther Phillips, Ann Sexton.

Mike Smith

You're doing a great job, the mix of older and newer is balanced. While I buy *Shindig!* for coverage of the classic '60s/70s era, I do like to see coverage on groups that draw from that era (Broadcast, Jane Weaver, Soundcarriers are examples off the top of my mind). Personally, I'd love to see a series devoted to early *avant-garde*/electronic and a series devoted to '60s French pop. Keep up the great work!

Steven Schmidt Visual

Of course, it may feel like that sometimes the well is running dry concerning '60s and '70s artists, particularly with the amount of years *Shindig!* has been published. Hence a suggestion of covering other artists/scenes outside the UK/US sphere.

I understand the need to expand the readership/subscription numbers, THAT is always wished, but it's the old conundrum, if you deviate from the known and established ideas, you run the risk of alienating the long term reader/subscriber, and if a new approach does NOT gain new readers/subscriber you've basically alienated and possibly lost the older long-term readership.

It's a magazine's main gamble to stay fresh, but to remain interesting to its long term readership and attract a new demographic.

At this time *Shindig!* dedicates much of its space to new left of field music, but does *Shindig!* know what % of its readership buys that new stuff?

It's always an issue for ANY editor or owner of any publication from a local fanzine to a weekly paper, to monthly mags etc, in finding the balance to attract new readership but keep the long term readership on side. Once it becomes a chore and is not enjoyable to publish through boredom, of doing the same ideas, that can reflect on the publication itself, so the harking to expand the scope from the original idea is ALWAYS tempting... but it is a gamble.

Stuart Robertson

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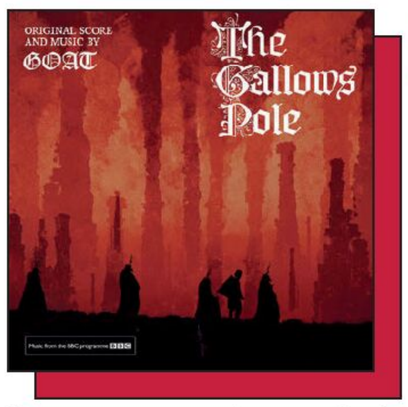
shindiggin'

What's HOT on the Shindig! turntable

The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month



GOAT
Jazzman

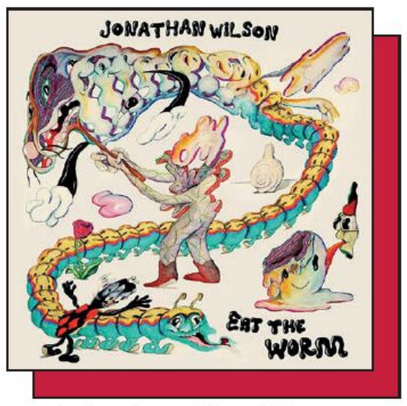
BBC TV's *The Gallows Pole* has placed the music of Goat front and centre as the Swedish heavy-psychsters provide the soundtrack to Shane Meadows' 18th century tale of the Cragg Vale coiners. Compiling a score that mixes previously released tracks with original material, the liltingly exquisite 'Jazzman' falls into the latter class. Here, Goat's trademark intense, penetrating psychedelic warring has been toned down a notch or two in favour of a modest guitar-based fingerpicking pastoral groove. Overlaid with eerie synth notes that enhance the supernatural essence of the story, 'Jazzman' builds over five minutes to an orchestral, albeit subtle, crescendo.

Available on: The Gallows Pole OST (ROCKET RECORDINGS DIGITAL)

REVBJELDE
A Common Treasury

Amicus, the latest album from Buried Treasure head honcho Alan Gubby's experimental project Revbjelde, was recorded between 2020 and 2022 and is finally out on (very limited and decidedly gorgeous) vinyl. Each track – and each groove – makes for its own sonic adventure, alternating between dystopia and abstraction. Among the album's many highlights is opener 'A Common Treasury', which kicks things off on a note of contemplation. It's a hypnotic slice of atmospheric, hazy vintage-sounding electronica that sinks its roots in both folk-horror and kosmische music and feels haunted and haunting in equal measure.

Available on: Amicus (BURIED TREASURE LP)



JONATHAN WILSON
The Village Is Dead

The most "pop" song from Wilson's fabulous "serious-listening" album *Eat The Worm* is the musically upbeat 'The Village Is Dead', a lyrical memory of the writer's years spent in New York City's Greenwich Village. The prose is vivid and alive, taking you to the heart of that bustling part of Lower Manhattan, as the cascading strings and sprightly walking bass carry the fast-paced song along. As a standalone single this should top any chart. Obviously, it won't, but fans of late '60s pop songcraft and quality analogue studio creations will lap it up.

Available on: Eat The Worm (BMG)

JOHNNY FLYNN
Rambleaway

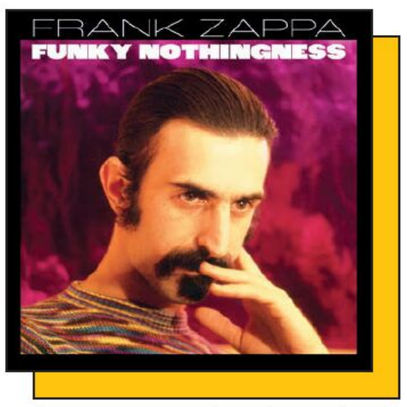
The release of Shirley Collins' new album *Archangel Hill* encouraged a dive-back into the eclectic 2015 compilation that featured contemporary artists adding their spin to songs that The Dame had previously recorded. Flynn plays it straight with this traditional English folk tune, letting a great song simply be. It's a cautionary warning about not falling romantically for a wrong 'un. As in all the best songs there's a timeless wisdom here. Flynn's vocal delivery perfectly captures the emotional detachment of the rake in the song, with his guitar playing as flashy and "neat and complete" as Rambleaway's scarlet jacket.

Available on: Shirley Inspired (EARTH 3-CD)

DEEP PURPLE
Anthem

Often dismissed as a waiting room for the Mark II model, Deep Purple Mark I nonetheless produced some choice originals in their three-albums-in-a-year lifespan. 'Anthem', from the middle instalment of the trilogy, remains one of the finest cuts in Purple's 50-plus-year career. Jon Lord suffuses this atypical exercise in psych balladry with cathedral-tinged classicism, with Rod Evans' brooding baritone dialling the melancholy up to Bronte-sized proportions. And check out those sweet, sweet backing vocals. In an ideal world, an edited version of this would have topped the charts and still receive 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' levels of reverence today.

Available on: The Book Of Taliesyn (HARVEST LP)



FRANK ZAPPA
I'm A Rollin' Stone

Frank always dug the blues and here on reconstructed "lost" album *Funky Nothingness* is a fine example of his affinity for meandering, low-slung jams as he revisits this Lightnin' Slim oldie. Recorded in 1970 the stylistic spill-over from *Hot Rats* is there for all to hear in the circuitous groove and combustible exchanges between Zappa's instantly recognisable guitar antics and the contrasting textures of 'Sugarcane' Harris's electric violin. Cruising on a slow and steady backbeat, this 12-plus-minutes leisurely amble has all the feel of a smoky after-hours session taken to the max.

Available on: Funky Nothingness (ZAPPA/UME 2-LP)

LAMP OF THE UNIVERSE
Into The Sages Rise

With Mellotron in full flight, this dreamy acoustic gem was surprisingly omitted from the original release but is thankfully rescued on the current reissue. For over 20 years, Craig Williamson has been crafting perfect explorations of inner space via contemplative journeys in search of the heart and soul of our seven chakras and his latest album ventures into the astral plane seeking the eponymous Akashic Field. Sprinkled throughout with flutes, wah-wah guitars, and shamanic vocals, we can all arrive without traveling for seven minutes of heavenly bliss.

Available on: The Akashic Field (SOUND EFFECT CD)

MILO SCAGLIONI
Locked In A Circle

We saw hints of great things from Milo Scaglioni on the release of his first LP back in 2016, a rainy collection of tunes apparently inspired by his transplanted Manchester home. Working for some five years on his follow-up, the singer-songwriter has returned to his native Milan and fused his melancholic way with a chord change with a maturing of his songwriting craft and some ambitious production. Lead track from his new LP is this earworm, with the kind of catchy hook that makes it all sound easy.

Available on: Invincible Summer (BANDCAMP CASSETTE)

RAB NOAKES
Clear Day

Founding member of Stealers Wheel, Rab Noakes left behind a catalogue of great songs but this evergreen classic from 1973 is a great entry point. Pop perfection with upbeat lyrics and feelgood harmonies provided by Gerry Rafferty and Joe Egan (who co-wrote the song), it's a mystery why it hasn't been covered more often. You can easily imagine George Harrison singing it back in the day. The homespun melodic flow feels like the natural precursor of future tunesmiths like Teenage Fanclub and Fountains Of Wayne.

Available on: Red Pump Special (WARNER BROS LP)

MARY LEE KORTES
No More

Michigan-born singer-songwriter Kortes led Mary Lee's Corvette through five albums of rootsy blue-collar rock including a Dylan-approved remake of the entirety of *Blood On The Tracks*, before embarking on a solo career in 2006. On this driving interpretation of one of Pete Ham's most desperately naked demos (one of his "suicide notes", along with 'Ringside', that close 1997 Rykodisc collection *7 Park Avenue*), she's ably assisted by long-time guitar foil Eric Ambel, the stark emotion of the song transformed into a driving country-rocker with Kortes's vulnerable vocal front and centre.

Available on: Shine On: A Tribute To Pete Ham (Y&T MUSIC 2-CD)

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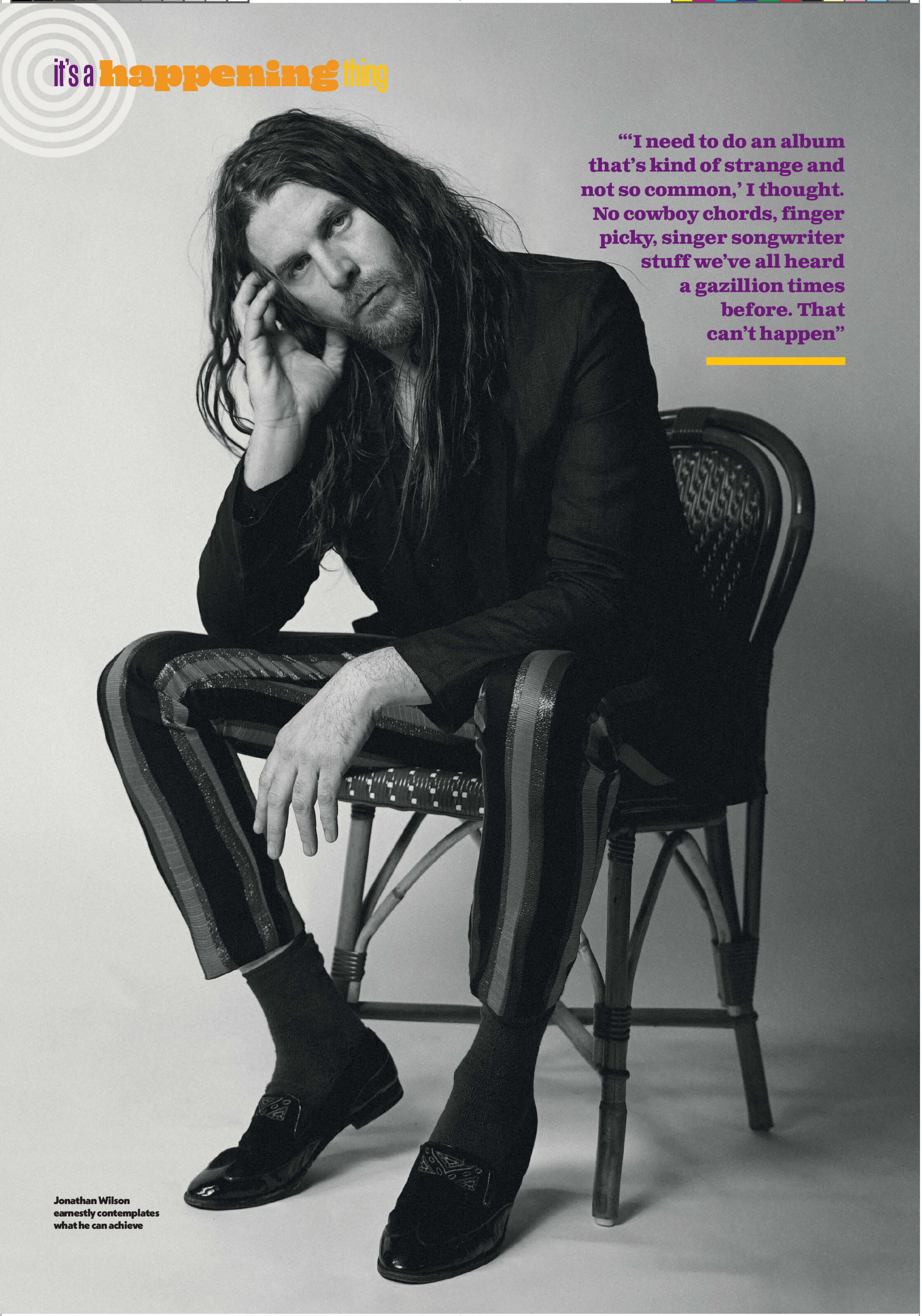
it's a **happening** thing

"'I need to do an album that's kind of strange and not so common,' I thought. No cowboy chords, finger picky, singer songwriter stuff we've all heard a gazillion times before. That can't happen"



Jonathan Wilson earnestly contemplates what he can achieve

A Moment Of Epiphany

Locked down at home with a new studio **JONATHAN WILSON** heard a piece of music that made him reconsider what being a recording artist meant to him.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS discovers the mindset behind the creation of *Eat The Worm*

A lot has changed since Jonathan Wilson released his back-to-basics album *Dixie Blur* on 6th March 2020, just one week before the world stopped. Promotion of the album, along with imminent touring, stalled. Fortunately, his significantly upgraded Fivestar Studios, now in Topanga Canyon, was functional. With Father John Misty's *Chloe And The Next 20th Century* completed, and Wilson locked down with time on his hands, the wonderful space would be both his salvation and muse. Music had already been made in the downtime when recording Misty, and with an uncertain period ahead it was the perfect time to be free and experiment.

'Marzipan', inspired directly by his recent discovery of Wigwam singer Jim Pembroke's 'Warm Rumours', from the 1972 concept *Hot Thumbs O'Riley – Wicked Ivory*, was the jumping off point for what would become an album. "It's like Zappa meets Beefheart" says Wilson of the album. "Pembroke does all these weird talent-show announcer voices, and just totally shoots the thing in the foot, as far as it being any kind of commercial success. Today that would be seen as self-sabotage. But it was inspiring. 'I need to do an album that's kind of strange and not so common,' I thought. No cowboy chords, finger picky, singer songwriter stuff we've all heard a gazillion times before. That can't happen.

"A lot of this batch of songs is a reaction to the production stuff that I do. I would be in the studio, doing long days with folks, and I'll have some wild off-the-wall ideas and they're like, 'No, no, no, that sounds crazy, JW.' So I would save it up for my album. I'm finally at a place to feel totally free to take chances and resist the urge to dumb things down. It's got to be kind of strange."

If the country-inspired previous album looked back to his origins in North Carolina and his discovery of music, *Eat The Worm*, and its reference to the odd practice of ingesting the Gusano de Maguey worm from a bottle of Mescal, Wilson's favourite spirit, is the songwriter recalling his psychedelically-charged adult life, from New York through to his later years in California. "I wrote 'Wim Hof' after I had taken some shrooms up in Big Sur. That's a good place to write and just get in a vibe," he laughs. "I was just really trying to experiment and do things and not be afraid, adding some scathing commentaries about where we are now." Touring with Roger Waters since 2017 may have rubbed off a bit on Wilson, allowing the younger songwriter to not hold back in his own work. Stadium show after stadium show playing Harvest-era Floyd songs has also contributed to the occasional dystopian element, and how could it not? "In other art forms you see it a lot... In jazz, for example," states Wilson of adoration for the older artists that have gone before. He has also worked with Jackson Browne, Bob Weir and Roy Harper. "In pop and rock, particularly indie-rock, anything 'classic' has been frowned upon.

"Roger informs it for sure. When it comes to the lyrics, I'd often think to myself 'Would Roger like this?' These people are your friends, and your colleagues. You soak up what they're about. Not only him, but Josh [Father John Misty] and Sam Burton too. These are the critics that I care about."

Having covered a lot of ground from his Canyon-esque early work through the more maximalist 2018 album *Rare Birds*, which cast off some of the "vintage shackles" and embraced '80s recording techniques, *Eat The Worm* is the album Wilson is most happy with, primarily due to the amount of time he had to fully experiment.

"'The Village Is Dead' started with me sitting at the drums and then I made the song fit the drum track. For 'Bonamassa', it was just a sketch of some weird fucking beat and the fucking jaw harp. Like, what is that? I was on one to make something like that, and then – boom! – it was a song."

The recording of the album ran across two and a half years, working around the nucleus of Wilson on drums and regular collaborators Jake Blanton, bass, and Drew Erickson, arrangements and keyboards. "There are a lot of details to the songs. I felt like this album was also time for me to expand my sound, so there are way more strings and horns than I've ever done before. I wanted to apply some of the sonic palettes of other productions I've worked on to my own music.

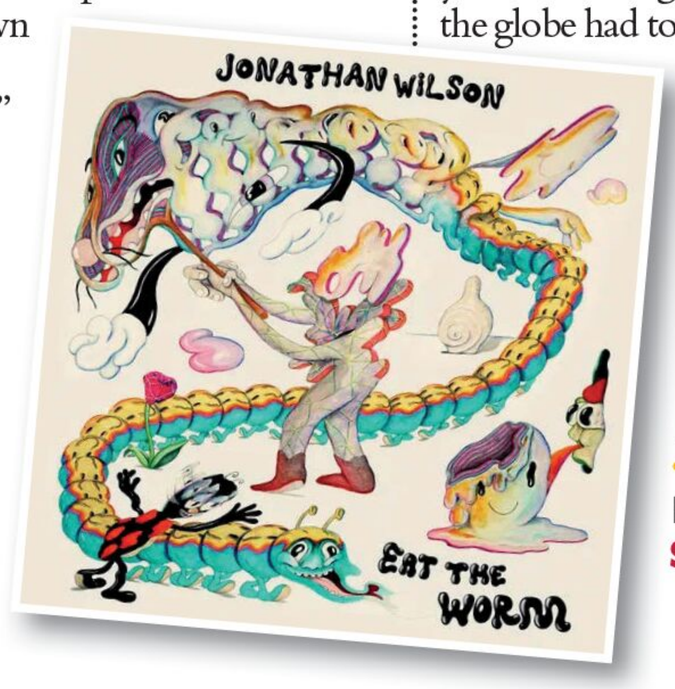
"It sounds crazy," he adds proudly. "I've been at this for more than 20 years, but this is the first time I really feel like I found my 'thing' – it's kind of a trip that it took this long. I finally feel like I found a way to express things I really want to say. If I want to be an asshole for a minute I can. If I want to sing a song to my wife about our day in the canyon, that's okay, too. For this album, I wanted to break out of any and all comfort zones I may have lapsed into as a writer, narrator, producer, or player."

Jonathan Wilson at 48 is in a good place. A position that many jobbing musicians would give up everything for. Touring with Roger Waters and producing other artists provides the financial security that solely touring his own music wouldn't. "To be able to pay the bills and have a spot to create this kind of stuff. That was my dream. And I'm basically there." BMG allow Wilson to do as he pleases with no pressure on making commercial music, and his superb Fivestar Studio provides him time far beyond any budget to finely hone his craft.

"They're putting cash into rock 'n' roll, which is pretty rare these days," he says of the major label, "especially when it's orchestrated weird experimental piano songs." At this point the huge success of his friends Father John Misty and Lana Del Ray (both appeared on *Rare Birds*) having phenomenal success comes into the conversation. "Yes," Wilson nods. "There's definitely been a conversion of the underground, if you will. What used to be a fringe artist in our day can now do well."

This particular daring musician is already considering how he will perform the material from *Eat The Worm* live. "I want to do some special gigs with the horns and strings. This is definitely the most orchestration I've ever had on a record, so I want it to be heard and seen. But it'll be expensive, so I will probably do some special shows in LA that we can film and use to promote the album and then come back with just a quartet to do some gigs and stuff here and there." *Shindig!* await this with immense anticipation.

"Part of my solo career and previous years of touring and bringing a band around the globe had to die for me to be able to make this music. I had to be completely devoid of monetary expectation or self-awareness of how my music may be perceived by others. I guess I wanted to hang out in my own lane more than I ever have on previous albums."



Eat The Worm is out on 8th September on Bella Union

Mello Fello

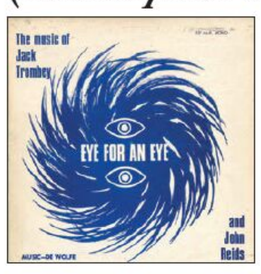
IAN BUTTON has led indie collective **PAPERNUT CAMBRIDGE** through 10 albums in 10 years, of which the two *Mellotron Phase* sets – which Button wrote, produced and played the bulk of – have become modern-day library music classics.

Here, he celebrates their reissue by picking 10 Mellotron-heavy/adjacent tracks, whose tapes were rolling as he tinkered

THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO GROUP

This Man Alone

(From *Eye For An Eye*, De Wolfe, 1966)



One of the great, brooding, minimal TV crime themes (Callan). Jack Trombey is an alias for Dutch composer Jan Stoeckart, and the track was originally called 'Girl In The Dark'. This tune was another memory jog, browsing through the rhythm patches in the Mellotron library, there are one or two slow ones like this – just piano and vibes backing, that kind of thing. The baritone guitar on this tune is fab too. One of the most fun bits of making the library stuff is thinking up the titles – when the tracks started they were just numbers, but later got turned into more genre-friendly names – things like 'Parker's Last Case' and 'Getaway Suit' for crime capers, 'Advantage Soho' and 'Mint Roadster' for the more Norman-Wisdom-in-paisley vibe, and 'Halogen Mist' or 'Dreams Of Persephone' signposting your full prog.

THE HERD

From The Underworld

(A-side, Fontana, 1967)

Not quite a Mellotron record, but one with this fantastic stately darkness that I tried to emulate on some of the library tracks. This was one of the earliest singles I heard and owned. It scared the life out of me as a kid but I couldn't stop listening to it. It's definitely prototype prog – the first time I heard Genesis's 'The Fountain Of Salmacis' on 'Fluff' Freeman's radio program a few years later, I thought it must be a new Herd record!

THE REG WALE QUINTET

Fruity Flute

(From *Quintet Of Modern Jazz*, De Wolfe, 1969)

The Mellotron and Chamberlin flute sounds are what I used most across the two albums I think, for top lines and melodies – and this tune is a huge influence – light-jazz…but kind of eerie again. Hearing this on *Farmhouse Kitchen* as a prog-soaked kid, it had the same kind of haunting atmosphere as something like the gentler King Crimson – the flutes on 'I Talk To The Wind' or 'Cadence And Cascade', Peter Gabriel's flute playing in Genesis – it all merged into one. It's always the sound of bleached out summer for me, never anything else.

KING CRIMSON

In The Wake Of Poseidon

(From *In The Wake Of Poseidon*, Island, 1970)

It was my dad who bought this album when it came out. He was a big brit-jazz fan – Neil Ardley and co – and I guess he'd read about KC linking to that world somehow. I'm not sure how much he liked it, but I loved it. I remember him explaining what a Mellotron was. "It's a keyboard playing tape recordings of real violins, son!" This was my gateway into other Mellotron prog, and I've always been fascinated the way that, over the years, that particular lost, wonky, haunted strings sound links across the genres too – from The Beatles to Genesis to Bowie, Roxy, and into later string synths and Joy Division.

DESMOND DEKKER

You Can Get It If You Really Want

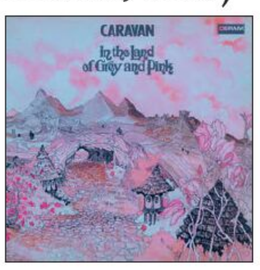
(A-side, Trojan, 1970)

I love pop-reggae, and my older sister was a huge fan of Trojan, so I heard loads of it growing up. The vibe of tracks like this filtered into one or two of the library tunes too, albeit based on a Mellotron rhythm track called "Bossa basic" that actually sounds more like the *Only Fools And Horses* theme. But then it's also the organs, the brass, the kind of fairground feel somehow, and the great pop melody over that simple chord progression. See also: early Hot Chocolate!

CARAVAN

Golf Girl

(From *In The Land Of Grey And Pink*, Deram, 1971)



Caravan is an influence in a couple of ways, I guess. I've nodded to their kind of distorted organ solo sound a couple of times, some of their more jazzy instrumental bits maybe, but this I think is my favourite Caravan song – and they take the Mellotron to the next level by playing it funky! It seems so unlikely to go for that, but it totally works. You wouldn't imagine a Mellotron being a remotely "nimble" instrument, based on what most people do with it. As a kid I imagined it must be a massive unit and was pretty surprised to find how small and cute they were!

KEITH MANSFIELD

Light And Tuneful

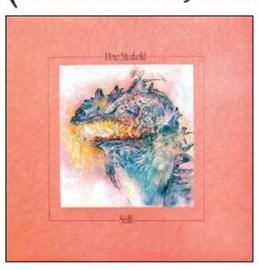
(From *Life Is For Living*, KPM, 1972)

This was another side of library music I wanted to explore for the albums: the kind of groovy, Swinging London in a sports car angle. I've always loved the *Wimbledon TV* theme music by Keith Mansfield. It's got some of the greatest drumming ever on it – I've tried to copy that kind of fill on a few of the Papernut tunes. It also meant exploring the Mellotron library (the G-Force one, for their M-Tron Pro software version) for more solo instrument sounds, as opposed to the clichéd prog strings and choirs. I found great solo brass patches to

blend together, great organ sounds, the Mellotron guitar sounds are amazing. I was getting into a world where things don't obviously sound like a Mellotron. It made me realise how versatile that idea of a tape playback instrument could be; how much more widely they were used than I'd probably realised.

Bands making their own tape banks from multi-tracks, so they could play their album recordings live, that kind of thing.

PETE SINFIELD
Under The Sky
(From *Still*, Manticore, 1973)



One of my favourite "surprise" albums i.e. getting it without knowing anything about it, apart from the Crimson connection. It's a record I return to more often than a lot of the more obvious classics. This track is one of my all-time favourite Mellotron-adjacent tunes. I say adjacent because this isn't a Mellotron… thanks to George from Ravenwood who spotted in the credits that it's a Freeman String Symphonizer, the first ever string synth. And this is one of the most evocative tracks I've ever heard. Again, it's a hazy high summer record. It doesn't work to play it on a gloomy winter afternoon. I've tried. The sound of it – the pitter-pattering drums, the reverb on Sinfield's voice, Fripp noodling – it's brilliant. And to me it almost sounds like it could be a Martin Hannett production or something. When I heard The Names (on Factory) in 1981, I had to go back to listen to this again. It's somehow the missing link between prog and post-punk!

KRAFTWERK
Radioland
(From *Radio-Activity*, EMI, 1975)

Wonderful, eerie stuff… mechanisms almost falling apart. Kraftwerk are total masters of this kind of minimalism. Music made from technology, lyrics about technology. It's utter genius, and this is my favourite Kraftwerk album. The Papernut library albums were commissioned by my friend George Barker for his boutique electronic music library Ravenwood Music. Everything he had was very discrete, deliberate electronica, so it was a slight stretch to get the Mellotron idea included, because the sounds weren't out-and-out synthesised or electro – but we decided in the end it was a similar thing. The specific technology dictated the creation of the music.

DAVID ESSEX
Hold Me Close
(A-side, CBS, 1975)

I'll stake my career that this record has been nowhere near a Mellotron – but I'll confess there's a track on *Mellotron Phase: Volume 2* that is heavily influenced by it. All the tracks on the second LP are based around the ready-made rhythm tracks that the Mellotron and Optigan had. Each key plays a recording of a live band playing couple of bars, and different keys are different chords, so you can construct a song sequence – it was really ahead of its time. I found a patch called 'Down Home' and as soon as I heard it, I thought, that's like a cowboy version of 'Hold Me Close', but it's also late '60s Paris, and off it went!

Mellotron Phase Vol 1 & 2 is out now on Ravenwood Music

"I was getting into a world where things don't obviously sound like a Mellotron. It made me realise how versatile that idea of a tape playback instrument could be; how much more widely they were used than I'd probably realised"

L-R: Andres, Ben Knight and Chris Robinson in the control room with a giant french fry ; Clay from Mapache and Brent ; Brent and CR; Chris Gunst and Farmer Dave

Meet The Love Puppets

Eleven years on from their last album LA stalwarts **BEACHWOOD SPARKS** are back.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS hears about recording with Chris Robinson and how it feels 20-something years on

Beachwood Sparks decided that it was time to record a new album, following on from 2012's *Tarnished Gold*, when they got together in 2021 to master the 20th Anniversary edition of their debut album. "It was 'pre-pandi' (late 2019)," explains bassist and songwriter Brent Rademaker. "We gathered in Santa Cruz at Chris and Jen [Gunst's] home and started cooking up ideas for tunes. It had been 10 years since the last album, and we'd lost a lot of friends and could feel the clock ticking. I guess, then like everyone else, we waited for the all clear. As usual we had a few false starts, so when it finally happened it really felt right and good!

"The first plan was to have Chris Robinson [Black Crowes] produce a single at a studio in San Francisco. Flights, hotels and studios were booked and vanished as we were all ordered to 'shelter in place'. One night at Dan Tanas in Hollywood he told me that he knew how to make 'the ultimate Beachwood Sparks album' so we went for it! We've never really been 'produced' before and we gave ourselves over to his process and chaos...it was FUN!

"As Chris Robinson put it... 'a recipe for a classic Beachwood Sparks album is six unfeigned, naturally beautiful songs from Chris Gunst, two sad, sorrowful country tunes with a big pleasing chorus from Brent, and Farmer Dave's electric surfing spirit dragons of sound' or something like that."

The inspirations Rademaker adds are "the usual". "Our lives and our love for each other… The Byrds," he laughs. "After three LPs and one EP, and the bit of time that has passed, it's cool to let 'our own sound' be 'the inspiration'."

With everything recorded live at John Dwyer (O Sees) and Eric Bauer's Los Angeles-based Discount Mirror Studios without click tracks or grids, one can expect the album to sound live and direct. "We followed the classic West Coast template of singing over the tracks for a natural harmony blend," adds Brent. "Farmer Dave always has some cool overdubbing tricks up his sleeve, but the majority of the music was played live on the studio floor, mistakes and all. We work best that way. Chris was super helpful in working out the arrangements, he brought his love for the band along with his incredible gift and gusto for making music.

"Gear-wise, Chris Gunst is is using his '65 Epiphone electric 12-string from the debut and *Once We Were Trees*. Farmer Dave broke out 'Bessie', the original lap-steep from the early days and the first album. He also has some new state-of-the-art Roland magic keyboard machine making unreal sounds."

With the songwriting process Rademaker says that they all just supported one another's individual ideas. "One song grew out of a collective 'jam'. We call that one 'Meet The Love Puppets'. It sounds like the theme to a zany country-rock game show. We were all really anxious to hear what Chris Gunst had written, as both Dave and I have been releasing music over the last 10 years with FDWOW/GospelbeacH. The Sparks really revolves around the Gunst songs and they're really good.

Farmer Dave has a song 'Gentle Samurai' with the line, 'Save a burrito in space for me'. The loss of many close friends looms along with time, love and the other magic stuff of life."

The album follows in late 2023 on Curation

A Path To The Past

As BELBURY POLY unleash their eighth album, SARAH GREGORY talks soundtracks, folk music and fretless basses with main man Jim Jupp

When Belbury Poly released *Farmer's Angle* in 2004 it simultaneously launched the Ghost Box label, Britain's home of hauntology. The brainchild of Jim Jupp and Julian House, the pair were not only forerunners of this new "lost-in-time" music, but innovative musicians in their own right; House as The Focus Group and Jupp as Belbury Poly.

And now having embraced a three-year hiatus, Belbury Poly are back with *The Path*, an album barely touched by recent (and current) events. "[The] music is very escapist with its head firmly in the sand," says Jupp. "It's never been a way for me to deal with big issues." In fact, Jupp has retreated even further into the past as he scales back the electronica. "I'd been listening to a lot of British movie soundtracks from the '60s and '70s… I wanted to lean into that atmosphere and sound-world a little and Justin's narrative idea made perfect sense matched with this style."

Justin Hopper is the literary equivalent of Jupp. Establishing the written intersection between landscape, memory and myth he affords *The Path* a neat balance between spoken word and instrumental. "I love his visionary prose and poetry style and the kind of outsider eye he brings to looking at British landscape and folklore," says Jupp. And where previous outing *The Gone Away* focused on vanished ancient landscape forces, *The Path* is more modern, less supernatural. Musically, however, the distinction is less so. "I think there are still strong elements of English folk melody woven through the album as there are on a lot of what I've recorded over the years."

Jupp also returned to the comfort of a band. "This really needed to be a full band to achieve the right atmosphere. Chris Budd on bass and guitar is an old friend of mine and a real aficionado of '60s/70s soundtracks," says Jupp. Alongside Budd is Max Saidi on drums and Jesse Chandler (ex-Mercury Rev) who contributed flute, clarinet, piano and synth and a touch of "American influence".

With *The Path* an obvious triumph, Jupp has a couple of things bubbling away in the background. "One solo project, quite ambient and electronic. The other very much keyed into a slightly English take on a certain moment in music production history where analogue technology started to give way to digital," says Jupp. "I never expected it would come to this, but Chris has just got hold of a fretless bass. God help us!"

The Path is out now on Ghost Box

"I'd been listening to a lot of British movie soundtracks from the '60s and '70s… I wanted to lean into that atmosphere and sound-world a little"

Following the path: Jesse Chandler, Christopher Budd, Justin Hopper, Jim Jupp
PHOTO: ANDI SAPEY

In Blossom

LADY APPLE TREE's beautifully accomplished debut LP bears rich fruit.

PAUL OSBORNE gathers up the musical harvest

"Thinking back, I've always loved playing with words, and I remember coming up with little melodic lines as a child," says Haylie Hostetter AKA Lady Apple Tree when asked when her journey as a songwriter began. "It amazes me how sometimes a song doesn't make sense at the time of writing but has relevance years later."

After several years of contributing to releases from the likes of Sam Burton, Sylvie and Drugdealer, Haylie is set to release her debut solo release under her Lady Apple Tree moniker. The eight-track self-titled EP is a beautifully accomplished debut which showcases Hostetter's expertly crafted country and folk-rock, an amalgamation of the classic sounds of Laurel Canyon and Greenwich Village, all delivered with her soaring, distinctive voice which belies her young age and heralds a major new talent. Her vocal stylings are something, which Hostetter attributes to the influence of her mother. "My mom has a naturally beautiful singing voice and sung to me and my two younger siblings while we were growing up. I attribute any of my innate vocal sensibility to her."

Listening to the *Lady Apple Tree* EP you can hear the influences of UK folk-rock (the chiming guitars and melodies of 'Silver Hands' and 'Round & Round'), sun-kissed country (the dreamy 'And There She Was') and classic '50s flavours (the wonderful 'Flame'). "At the time of writing a lot of these songs I was deep in the traditional folk and country wormhole. Joan Baez was a big introduction for me to a lot of amazing traditional folk tunes as well as Peter, Paul, & Mary. I learned a lot of my technique by singing along to their renditions."

With a band that includes Sam Burton and members of Drug Dealer, and production from former partner Will Wordon, the EP has a warmth and intimacy that proves a tantalising taster for her debut album that's currently in the works. "I recorded my EP about three years ago now with my former partner, at the time we had access to an abandoned recording studio in the Santa Monica canyons. We were able to revamp the space, and with Worden on production, and our other friend Hunter Watts on the soundboard, we put together these songs on our own. We had somewhat limited knowledge on what it took to make an album, so it isn't necessarily perfect, but it has an honest and heartfelt quality that I've grown to love."

Lady Apple Tree EP is out on 15th September on BeaconLight

Haily Hostetter shakes the tree

New Habits

Treetop Flyers Reid Morrison and Laurie Sherman branch out with the summery sound of **ALBERT**

The COVID lockdown was a time of adversity but also opportunity. Reid Morrison and Laurie Sherman of acclaimed folk-rockers Treetop Flyers had released an album in 2021 titled *Old Habits*. Pleased as they were with the results, the interruption of their regular routine allowed them to try something new. "Myself and Laurie have always liked the more mellow style of music so we set to work with that as a focus," says Morrison. "Groove and space were a huge inspiration for us."

The result is Albert. Their debut album is certainly, as its title states, *Time Well Spent*. A collection of seven country-soul songs it is redolent of languid summer days. Lyrically it looks at love in its many facets. "Questioning it, suffering from it," observes Morrison, but also being "at one with it". Opening track 'Mona' leans more towards the former with its bittersweet memories of lost love; 'Lay On Me' a more hopeful articulation of the latter. There's an evocation of nature in 'Wild Swimming'.

Morrison and Sherman are supported on the album by a band including members of Surfing Magazines and Jessica's Brother. Devin Tuel of Native Harrow adds beautiful harmonies to the bruised soulfulness of Morrison's lead vocal. Together, their sound has a warm and lilting cadence, music evocative of hazy sunshine.

And there's more to follow. "We want to get some shows under our belts as the live element of the project has really started to sound good," enthuses Morrison. "We wanna keep the wheels in motion." That includes an EP that should see release later this year.

As for the origin of the band's name, look no further than the handsome feline on the front cover of the album. *Time Well Spent* will also sink its somewhat softer claws into you.

As told to Clive Webb

CARGO COLLECTIVE

PUBLIC IMAGE LTD
END OF WORLD
PIL OFFICIAL 2LP / CD

The 11th PiL studio album and first in 8 years. Typical PiL, unpredictable to the last. Features Hawaii, the most personal piece of songwriting that John Lydon has ever shared.

HALF JAPANESE
JUMP INTO LOVE
FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

A meeting of minds from the world's favourite indie-alt-rock outsiders, led by the ever-effervescent Jad Fair. "Amid hard-riff jams, swinging ditties, lovelorn ballads and other gems, Jad persistently breathes life into Half Japanese" NPR

THE HOLY FAMILY
GO ZERO
ROCKET RECORDINGS LP / CD

The Holy Family return with their glorious second album 'Go Zero' – a darker and heavier take on their pagan psychedelia – if you dig anything from Can, Boredoms or Oneida, then step this way.

JESSY LANZA
LOVE HALLUCINATION
HYPERDUB LP / CD

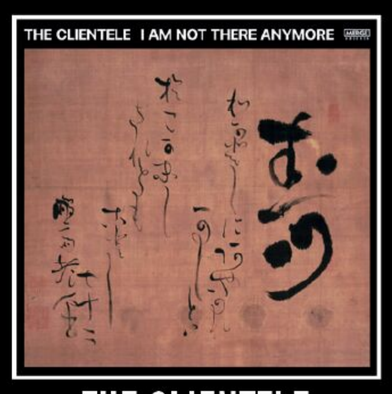
The sound of an artist in bloom, 'Love Hallucination' is bold and immediate, from club-ready to downbeat and sultry, and Jessy Lanza's most clear and authentic production yet.

DOT ALLISON
CONSCIOUSOLOGY
SONIC CATHEDRAL LP / CD

The former One Dove singer and songwriter's new album – and first for Sonic Cathedral – is both majestic and mind-expanding. Features guitar from Andy Bell and string arrangements by Hannah Peel.

MUTOID MAN
MUTANTS
SARGENT HOUSE LP / CD

Mutoid Man, the power trio featuring vocalist/guitarist Stephen Brodsky (Cave In), drummer Ben Koller (Converge) & new bassist Jeff Matz (High On Fire) return with their first new album in 6 years & most mindboggling effort yet, Mutants.



THE CLIENTELE
I AM NOT THERE ANYMORE
MERGE RECORDS 2LP / CD

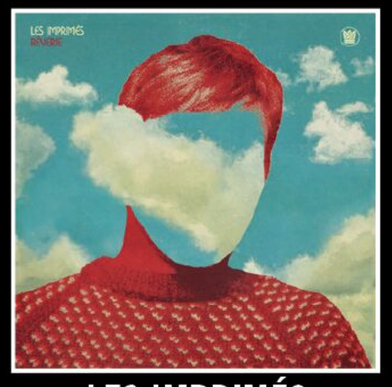
"These songs offer an uncommonly generous wealth of grace and beauty." – Uncut

HOLLIE COOK
HAPPY HOUR IN DUB
MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

A heavenly set of dub versions to pair with Hollie Cook's 2022 album Happy Hour. Including new vocal features by Josh Skints and Kiko Bun.

STEPHEN STEINBRINK
DISAPPEARING COIN
WESTERN VINYL LP

Disappearing Coin is a musical show-and-tell through a lens of vibrant pop and meticulously wrought folk, inspired by the songwriter's Buddhist studies and time spent restoring stained glass windows.



LES IMPRIMÉS
RÊVERIE
BIG CROWN LP / CD

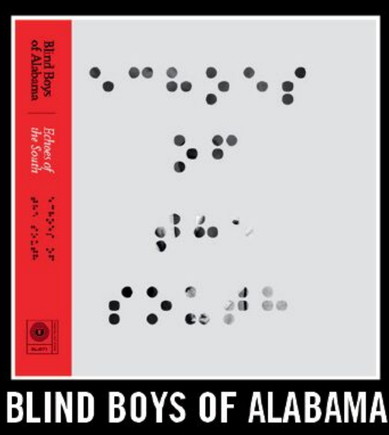
Debut full length, Rêverie is a heartfelt, highly infectious & unique shade of Soul music. Frontman Morten Martens' delivery & production give Les Imprimés the rare quality of immediate attraction that only deepens the more you listen.

THE BUDOS BAND
FRONTIER'S EDGE
DIAMOND WEST RECORDS LP / CD

New EP by the fiery, energetic, genre-defying group. It finds them hungry, passionate & primed to charge into their next epoch. Their 1st release on Diamond West (founded by members Thomas Brenneck & Jared Tankel) after 2 decades on Daptone Records.

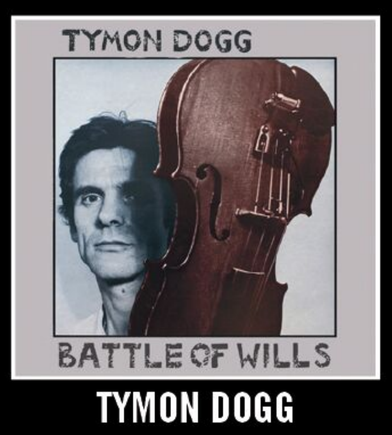
HOLY WAVE
FIVE OF CUPS
SUICIDE SQUEEZE LP / CD

Wanders deeper into new sonic territories. Euphoria is often found in the search.



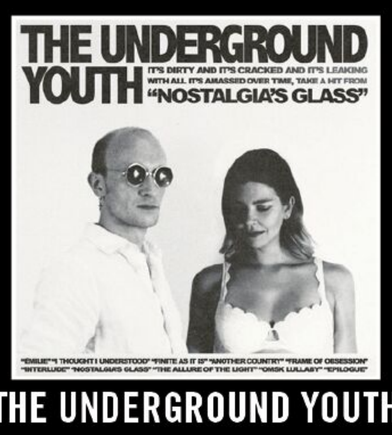
BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA
ECHOES OF THE SOUTH
SINGLE LOCK RECORDS LP / CD

Echoes of the South's vintage gospel and soul tunes are as moving as they are timeless, transcending genre and era to touch something deep and fundamental about the human condition.



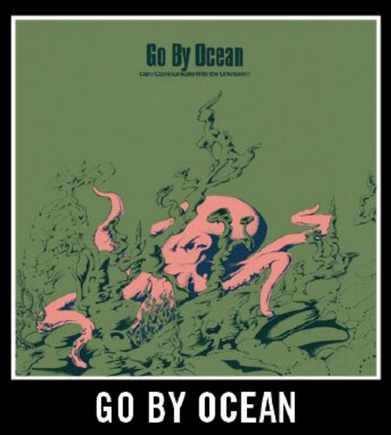
TYMON DOGG
BATTLE OF WILLS
TINY GLOBAL PRODUCTIONS 2LP / 2CD

Tymon's history with Apple Records, Moody Blues, The Clash and Poison Girls offer few clues to the iconoclastic brilliance of this greatly-expanded Y Records masterpiece, remastered with liner notes.



THE UNDERGROUND YOUTH
NOSTALGIA'S GLASS
FUZZ CLUB LP / CD

'Nostalgia's Glass' is the eleventh album from cult Berlin group The Underground Youth. Nostalgic in both style and subject matter, it marks a return to the hazy, psychedelic post-punk of their earlier LPs.



GO BY OCEAN
CAN I COMMUNICATE WITH THE UNKNOWN?
ROYAL OAKIE CD

Produced alongside Tim Bluhm and David Glasebrook, the album finds inspiration in the down-to-earth folk rock of the 1970's, featuring members of The Mother Hips, ALO, Tea Leaf Green, and more.

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it's a **happening** thing

The Dance Cicada

ROBERTO CALABRÒ ventures into the iridescent world of French band **TECHNICOLOR NOIR** talking to band head honcho Alexandre "Astro" Hussenet

Good things come to those who wait. Technicolor Noir hail from the suburbs of Paris and have released their multicoloured debut LP seven years after 'Danger On The Corner', their first and only single so far. In between the group faced line-up changes, temporary splits and, like many others, a forced hiatus due to COVID-19. Eventually, underground veteran Alexander 'Astro' Hussenet and his mates, Russian guitarist and former Karovas Milkshake Seva Slepushkin, drummer Eric Barbarin and bass player Yves Choisy, made it work. After all of this effort, there's a palpable sense of excitement surrounding *Technicolor Noir*, a musical journey that begins and ends with the two-part psychedelic epic 'Look At The Sun'. Each song on the album explores different '60s styles, reflecting the band's many influences and sources of inspiration.

"We started as a sunshine-pop folk-rock band with a female singer. Now, with only boys, we naturally evolved into a more garage/psych-inspired sound," reveals Astro. "Among our main influences are The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band, The Index, The Blues Magoos, the moody New England sound of groups like The Rising Storm, The Mauves, The What Fours, The Rogues and, of course, the *Pebbles* series."

So, it's no great surprise that their debut LP explores iridescent folk-rock in songs such as 'Danger (On The Corner)' and 'Dreaming Little Mademoiselle Swingin'', pays homage to the exciting fuzz-fuelled garage sound ('What's Going On?', the hypnotic 'Give Me A Gun') or slow-paced psychedelia in 'Strawberry Blonde'. Listeners can also lose themselves in the nostalgic ballad 'Mother Fades' or the catchy 'The Dance Cicada'.

When it comes to lyrics, Technicolor Noir add a caliginous nuance. "I try to have a dark undercurrent in my songs often combined with joyous music. A lot of them are about my life experiences and frustrations. 'Contrary Man', for instance, is about my unconventional, stubborn, and rebellious character, refusing to comply, 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' is about the underground versus the masses, while 'Mother Fades' talks of taking care of my sick mother before she died. I was inspired by The Index's 'Rainy, Starless Nights', I tried to recapture that sad mood." With the album now in the stores, Technicolor Noir are eager to hit the road.

"I try to have a dark undercurrent in my songs often combined with joyous music"

Technicolor Noir is out now on Dangerhouse Skylab

Technicolor Noir look to the sun
PHOTO: LUCA BATTAGLIA

hear & now

Teenage Fanclub's **NORMAN BLAKE** shares his current fave raves

LISTENING (OLD)

I've been revisiting the Ween album *Quebec* recently. I've liked them since first hearing 'Push Th' Little Daises' in the early '90s. My mate Dave Barker released that record in the UK (Dave also put out the first Teenage Fanclub LP). The album is incredibly eclectic, you really don't know what's coming next. The first track sounds like Motörhead, the second is a lounge-y number written from the perspective of someone who is on the antidepressant Zoloft. The album is in turns funny, sophisticated and at times completely bonkers. There are some really well-crafted songs. 'Tried And True' features a little technical trick that they use on quite a few tracks: a very obviously detuned vocal, which makes it all sound a bit odd, but also very charming. The pick of the bunch is 'I Don't Want It'. Beautiful melody, great harmonies and a brilliant guitar solo. I can play that one over and over again.

LISTENING (NEW)

Selma French's *Changes Like The Weather In The Mountain*. We got to know Selma last year when she toured with us as part of Annelise Frøkedal's band. Selma has a fantastic voice! Richly textured. I love the way she effortlessly slides between notes. For reference, the music is somewhat like Fairport Convention, but there are Norwegian folk and jazz elements in there too.

READING

WG Sebald's *The Rings Of Saturn*. The book is ostensibly an account of a walking trip that Sebald took in Suffolk in the mid-90s, but we don't quite know if the experiences he is relating to us are real or imagined. It's about the passing of time and memory, themes that we often write about in our band. It's peppered with mini essays on everything from Rembrandt's [1632 painting] 'The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp' to an historical account of the introduction of the silkworm to Europe. Like all of Sebald's books, the prose is beautiful.

WATCHING

True Romance and *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood*. I watched these movies back-to-back recently. Tarantino wrote the script for *True Romance* and it's the template for much of what was to follow in his career. Snappy dialogue and pop culture references galore. *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood* is Tarantino's masterpiece. It's a homage to the art form that is also an industry, and all the madness and kitsch that is involved therein. It does something that only a movie can do. It trashes Charles Manson and his goons and gives Sharon Tate, Jay Sebring, Wojciech Frykowski and Abigail Folger their lives back. That's a very satisfying ending.

As told to Andy Morten

Nothing Lasts Forever is out on 22nd September on PeMa/Merge

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it's a **happening** thing

Tomorrow's Truth

JON 'MOJO' MILLS celebrates the vinyl reissue of **BOWES PARK BAND**'s early '70s private press obscurity

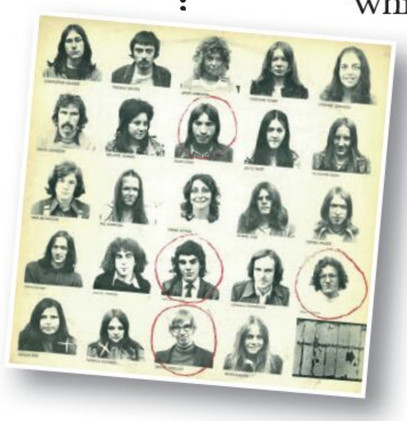
Hornsey College Of Art was the most peaceful element of the student uprising in London during the heated May of 1968. Unlike Paris, this was a "Sit-In", not a riot. Perhaps that says something about the leafy North London suburb and the local passive middle-class students that organised it. Nevertheless, the impact of the six-week long occupation of the college's central building on Crouch Hill, Crouch End was felt greatly. From then on, the institution was viewed as a hot bed of progressive radicalism fuelled by left-wing tutors and layabout long-haired students.

That explains why the rather delightful 50 copy private-press album, made by college alumni, released as Bowes Road Band's *Back In The HCA* in 1973, is such a distinctly laid-back, imaginative, and very English affair. Mick Farren's decisively charged proto-punk it's not. Main protagonists Dave Pescod (guitars/vocals), Ted Rockley (alto sax/clarinet/piano/synth), Phil Rawle (bass), and Alan Lewis (drums/vocals) delivered an album that was rather timeless, eschewing overtly prog and heavy influences for a selection of off kilter, quirky, slightly-delic pop songs that sit in with the hallowed Forever Amber/Agincourt/Complex canon (see *S!* #125); part Zombies, Beatles, Soft Machine.

"It wasn't like we were mad young things who were desperate and dreamt of making a record. It was more, we were just sort of trying to put a few songs together," expressed Rockley, who worked in graphics and animation for 30 years and then became a trustee of The National Jazz Orchestra.

Rob Wells (HCA audio technician) convinced the faculty to acquire various pieces of music equipment, including an expensive VCS3 synthesiser. He also built his own mixing desk and knocked a hole in the wall to create a recording room. "Maybe he wanted to expand the department into a fully-fledged recording studio," considers Lewis.

Recorded between January and July '73 the results were better than expected, leading to Complementary Studies tutor Bob Rankin suggesting the musicians get in touch with a friend of his at PYE studios in Marble Arch, regarding getting some records pressed. Pescod, Rawle and Lewis worked on the sleeve design as a "graphic's project" inspired by The Beatles' *White Album* mug shots. It was primitive but effective, as was the DIY insert featuring lyrics and info. Fifty copies were printed with the band taking 10 each, which were all given away at the degree graduation. No one knows what happened to the remaining copies.



Bowes Park Band's Back In The HCA is out on 1st September on Jakarta/Uno Loop

Pining for classic '70s/80s US network TV in this soulless digital age? Then why not switch to Programme 4, a sumptuous new online channel that recreates the medium's golden age with vivid style and eye-popping authenticity. Rachel Lichtman, Programme 4's LA-based creative director, driving force and "one woman band, playing Farfisa with my elbows whilst blowing a Benge trumpet and crashing knee cymbals" has fashioned what she calls the manifestation of a lifelong immersion in the comedy/music/design/film/radio/television of the 20th century. "Things that shaped not only my aesthetic and humour, but my very being." The schedule may be in its infancy but viewers can already luxuriate in programme samplers, adverts and idents at the website now, as well as tuning in to sister radio station Easy AM 66, where the sounds are soft and brassy and it's always cocktail hour.
programme4.com

good news

Newyddion da! The fifth **ARA DEG FESTIVAL** curated by Gruff Rhys takes place between 24th and 26th August at Neuadd Ogwen in Bethesda, North Wales. The Super Furry Animals front man tells us that the event organisers "have really knocked it out of the park and into the cosmos this year". Lined up on the launch pad is an eclectic and international array of musicians including Deerhoof, Permanent Draft, Rozi Plain and Yann Tiersen. In addition to a spoken word performance from Ian Svenonius, there's the promise of new material being premiered by Rhys himself.
neuaddogwen.com/en/ara-deg-2023

Audio archaeologists Light In The Attic uncovered rare find *Dreamin' Wild* by teenage brothers **DONNIE & JOE EMERSON** in 2012. The siblings' story has now been turned into a movie, and to celebrate, the label has reissued the album on blue vinyl and as a picture disc. Look out too for a heart-shaped version of single 'Baby'. Also released is *One For Your Dreams*, a visual retrospective of the life and career of **NANCY SINATRA**. The book features many unpublished photographs, including personal images from family albums. A stunning luxury edition comes in a 3D lenticular clamshell case with choice of four colour designs.
lightintheattic.net

All aboard! October sees the release by Soul Bank Music of a box set including all six albums by **BRIAN AUGER'S OBLIVION EXPRESS**. *Complete Oblivion* is the first reissue of these influential jazz-funk records since their original release. Remastered from the original studio master tapes with faithfully reproduced cover art, the albums are accompanied by an illustrated booklet featuring a new interview with the Hammond organ maestro. While you're waiting for the Express, you can take a journey through the rest of his career with *Auger Incorporated,* a 3-LP retrospective including rare and unreleased tracks, available this month.
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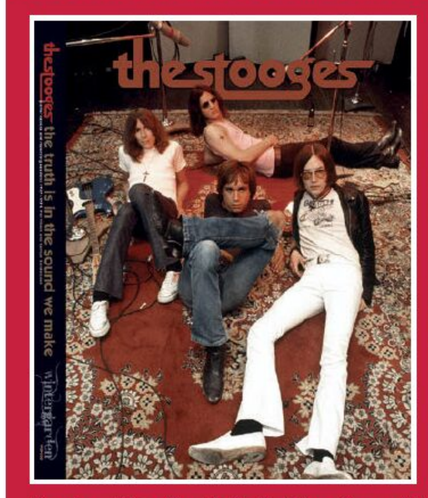

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INNOVATIVE LEISURE

Spells And Prayers

BIG POTATO has consistently released interesting albums that tick boxes here at *Shindig*!

JON 'MOJO' MILLS hears about the highs and lows, and what lies ahead

Big Potato Records began as the DIY pipe dream of three friends in 2006. Musician/producer Nick Holton (HOO), Neil Halstead of Slowdive/Mojave 3 fame, and renowned screenwriter Tom Butterworth. Nick and Neil's roots were in the Reading shoegaze scene and the label's first releases were a way of encouraging the disillusioned diaspora from that time to keep making and releasing music. First crops included Caz Mechanic, Coley Park, Holton's Opulent Oog and Loose Salute.

"It sadly was a disaster from the oft," laughs Holton in hindsight. "The minute we kicked off, the record industry took a massive tumble. Pinnacle Records, who all our record shop mates had told us to work with, went under along with all our records! Skip forward to 2017 and with encouragement of friends we started again."

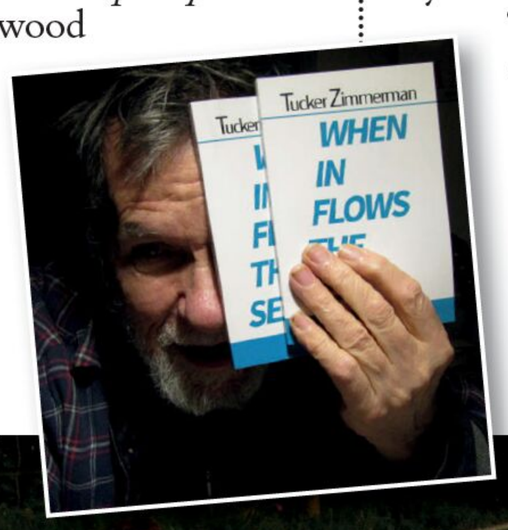
Since then Big Potato's network of bands, helpers and releases has grown slowly but determinedly, including a wholehearted embrace of the Back To Vinyl cult. "We grew a Californian connection and re-released All Night Radio's classic *Spirit Stereo Frequency* and Farmer Dave of Beachwood Sparks *Wizards Of The West*," he adds of two key releases from their second wave. "Getting to re-release All Night Radio was a lovely moment," agrees Butterworth.

"Them boys are crazy."

Nick Holton grew into the role of label chief and steers the whole shebang from a collection of self-built sheds/studios in Wallingford, Oxfordshire. "Our pipe dream remains the same," he states proudly. "That is, to release music we love in a way that makes everyone involved happy. It's led to a naturally eclectic but psych-leaning catalogue. This year's lauded solo album by Simon Rowe (Chapterhouse) sits alongside Emmett Finley's mythical 1971 album, right next to song poet Tucker Zimmerman or Brighton's indie psych-poppers Moon Attendant. Upcoming highlights include Everything Else, a debut from two Thames Valley 18-year-olds, mixed by genre champion Halstead, which fires new life into the shoegaze dream where all this began."

The trio, whose roles Holton describes as "I do the heavy lifting, Tom does the heavy thinking and Neil does the heavy", are keen to continue their mission of encouraging people who would never dream of releasing their music to do so. "Ultimate outside outsider bands. Like our latest band Everything Else – I don't think they thought beyond their own bedroom," closes Holton.

"It was lovely to help Simon Rowe or Tucker Zimmerman with his poetry book, their gratitude was enriching."



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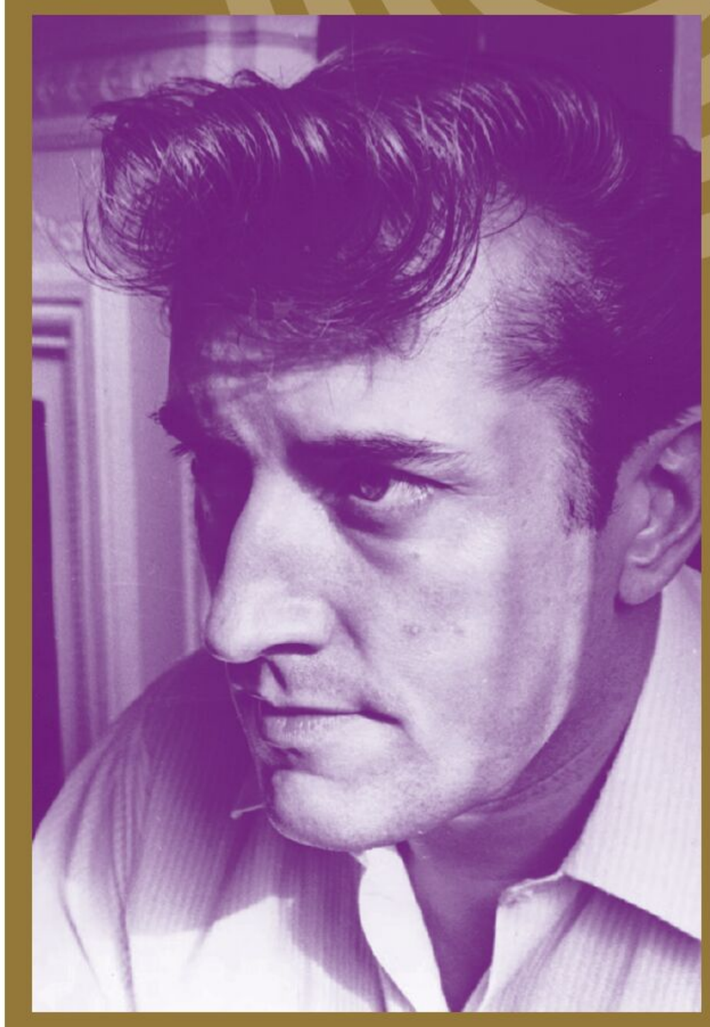
Mashing it up. L-R: Tom Butterworth, Neil Halstead, Nick Holton

next issue



JOE MEEK
Holloway Freakbeat: an in-depth look at the sonic maverick's mid-60s productions

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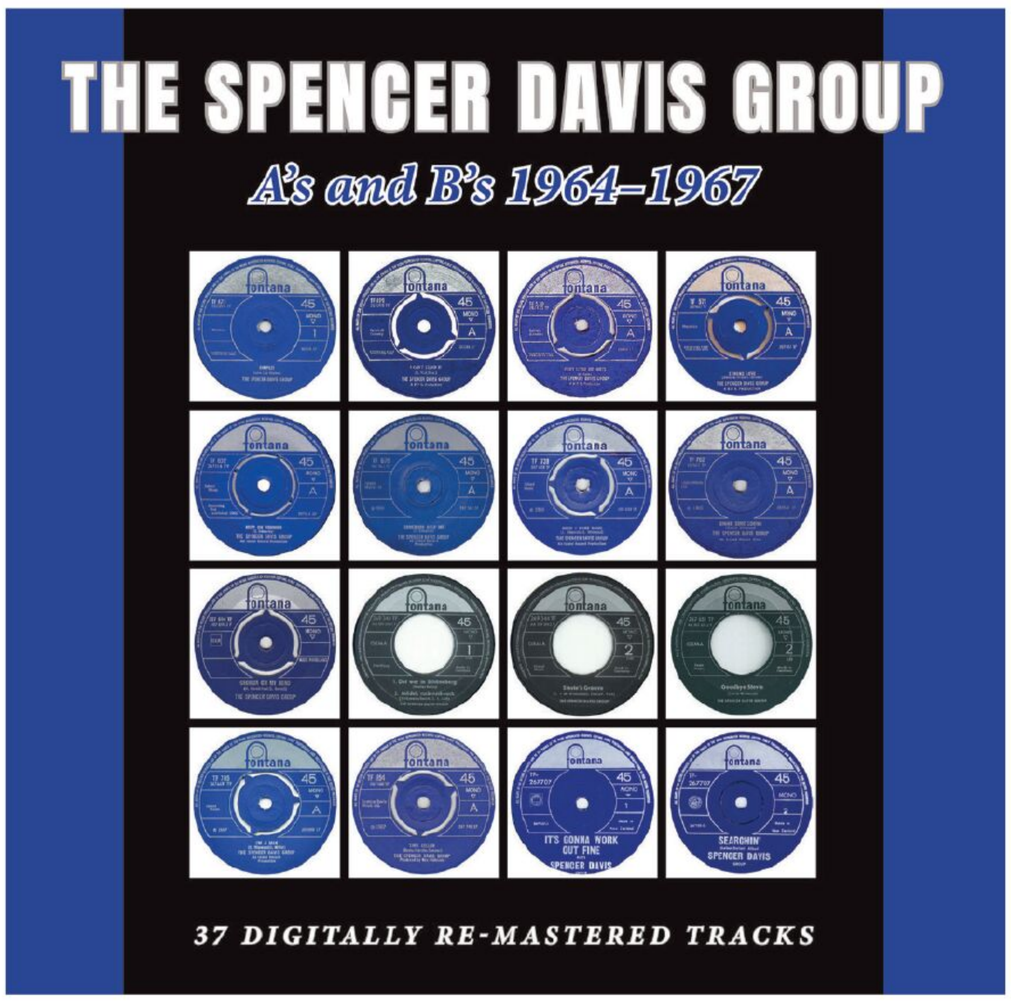

THE SPENCER DAVIS GROUP

A's and B's 1964–1967

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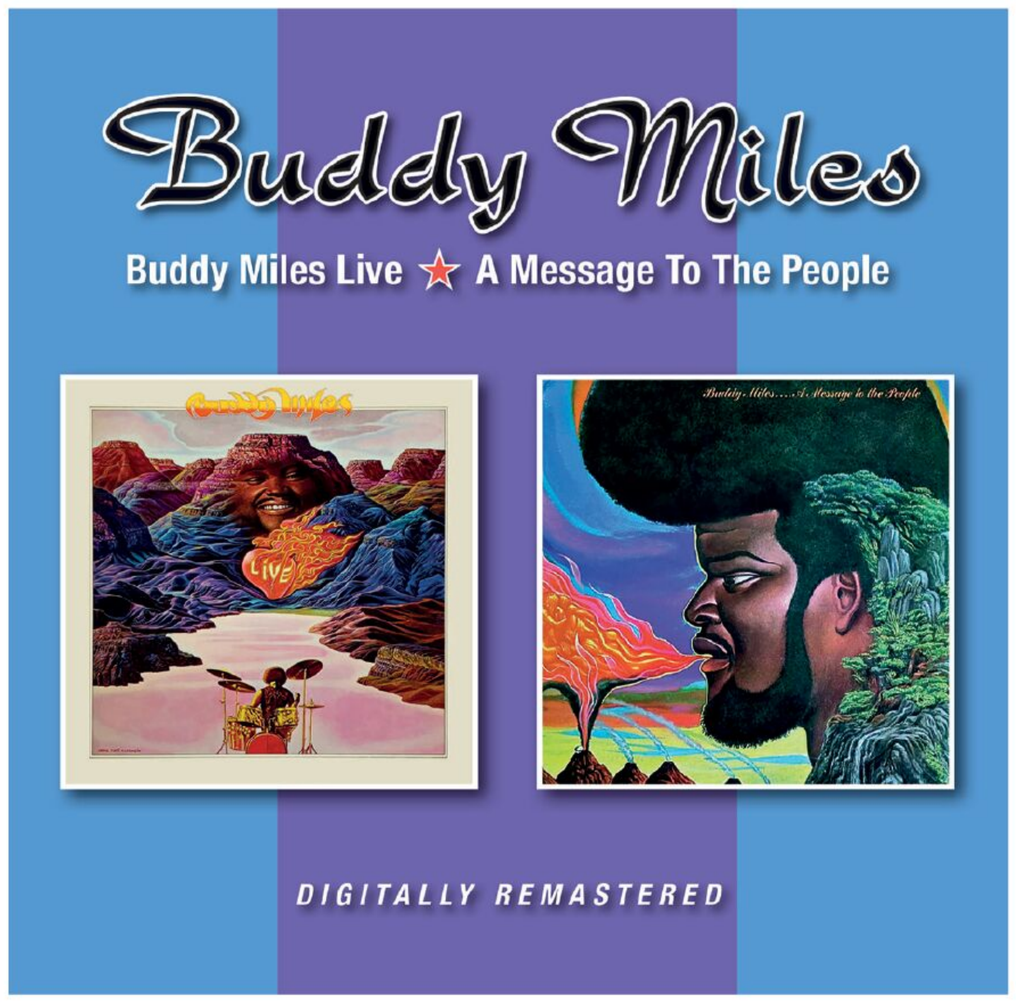

BUDDY MILES

Buddy Miles Live / A Message To The People

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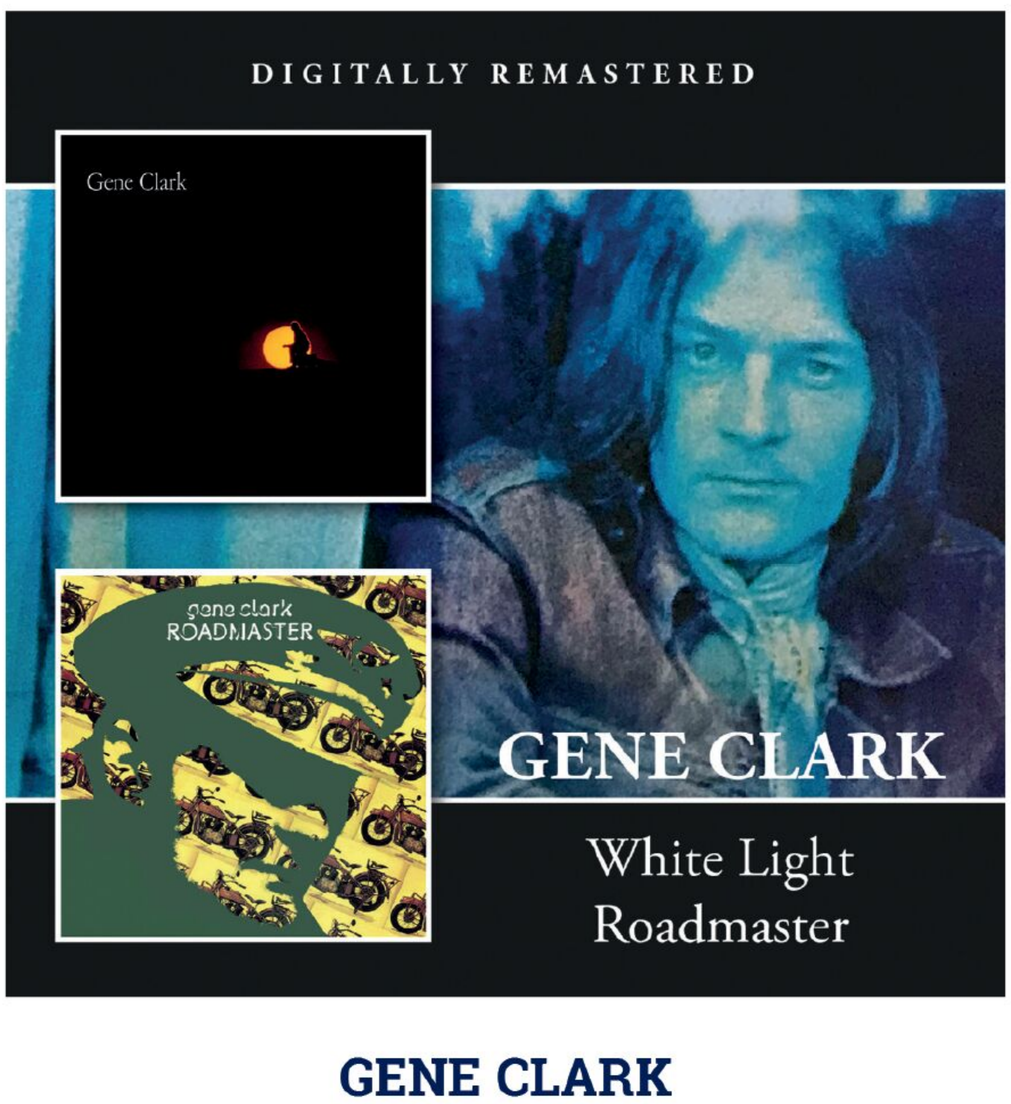

GENE CLARK

White Light / Roadmaster

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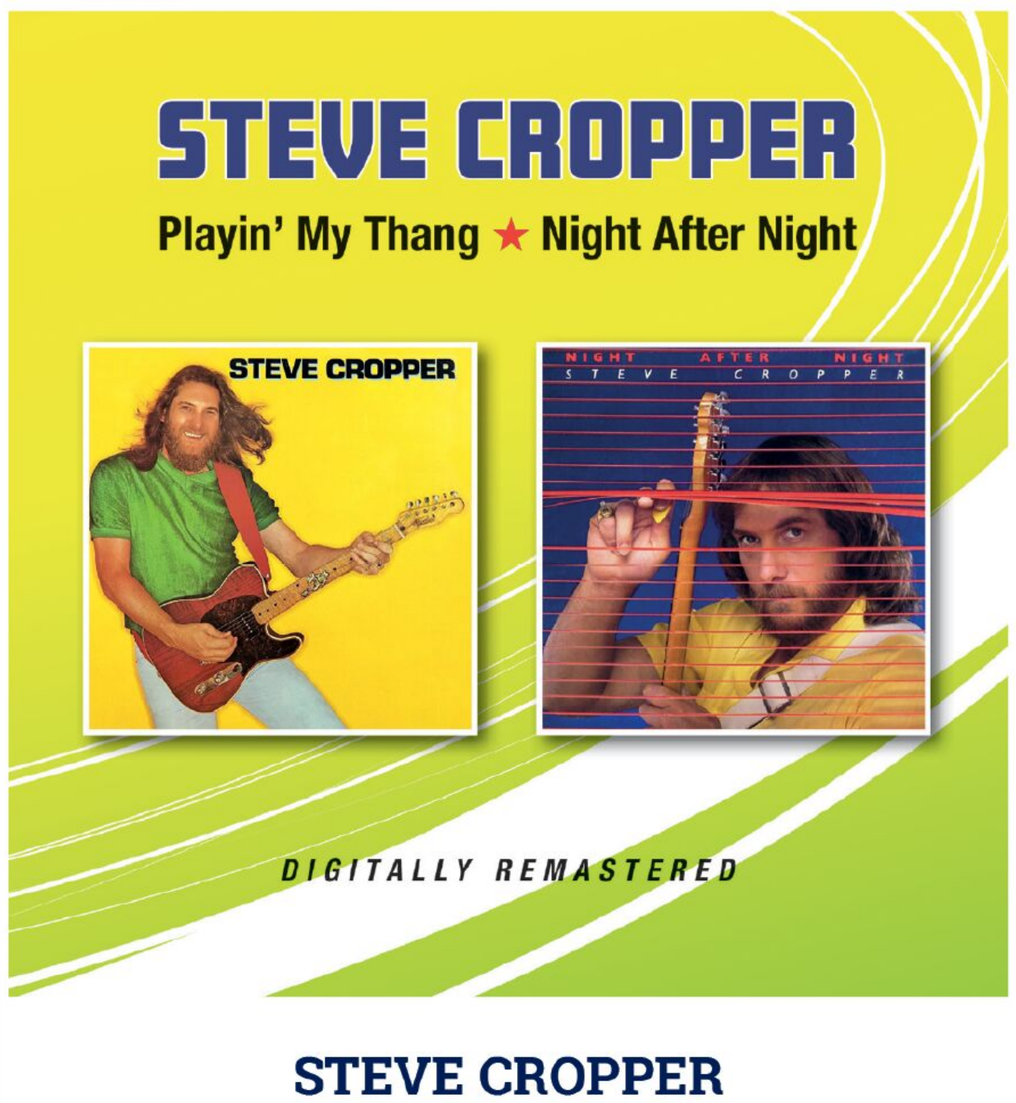

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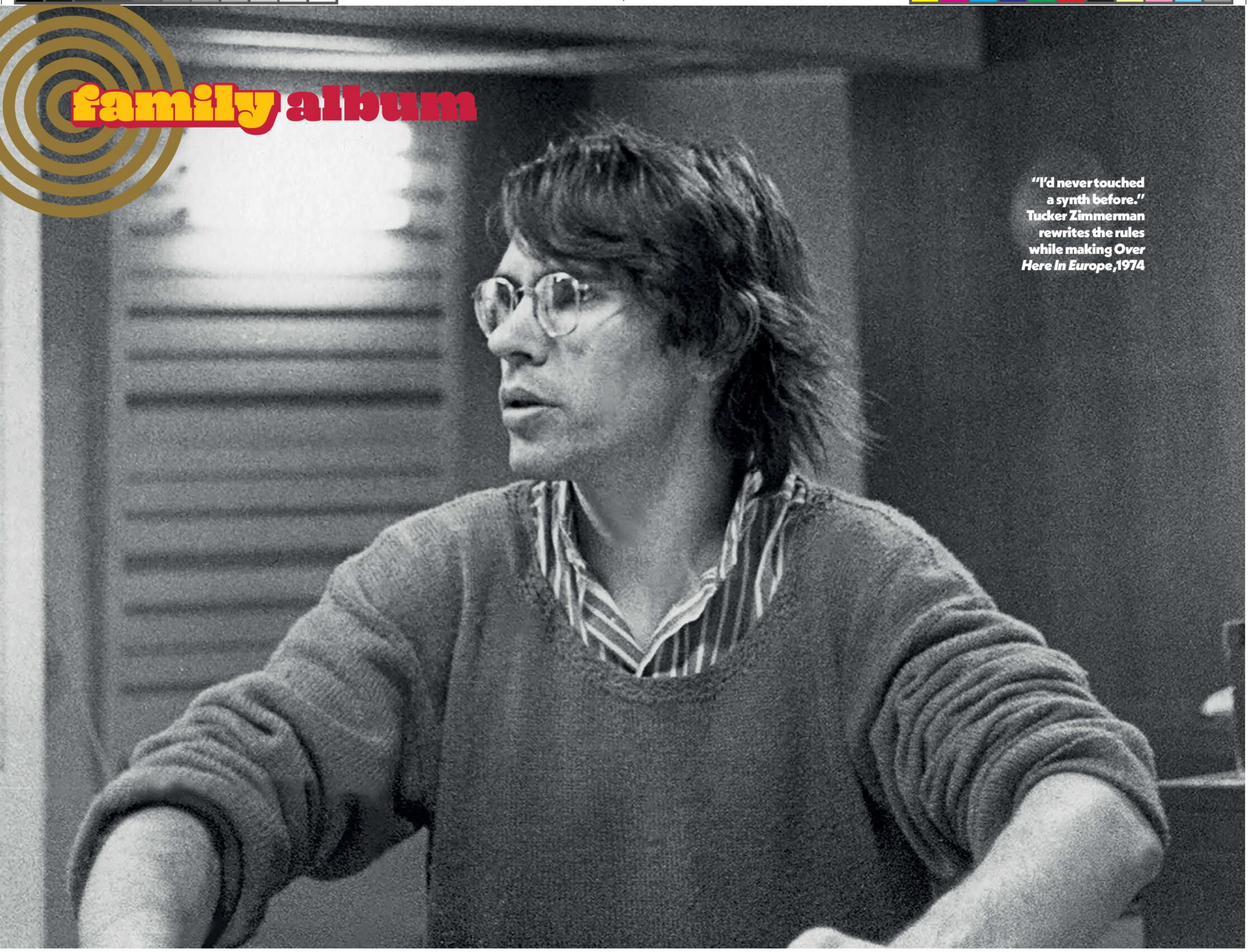
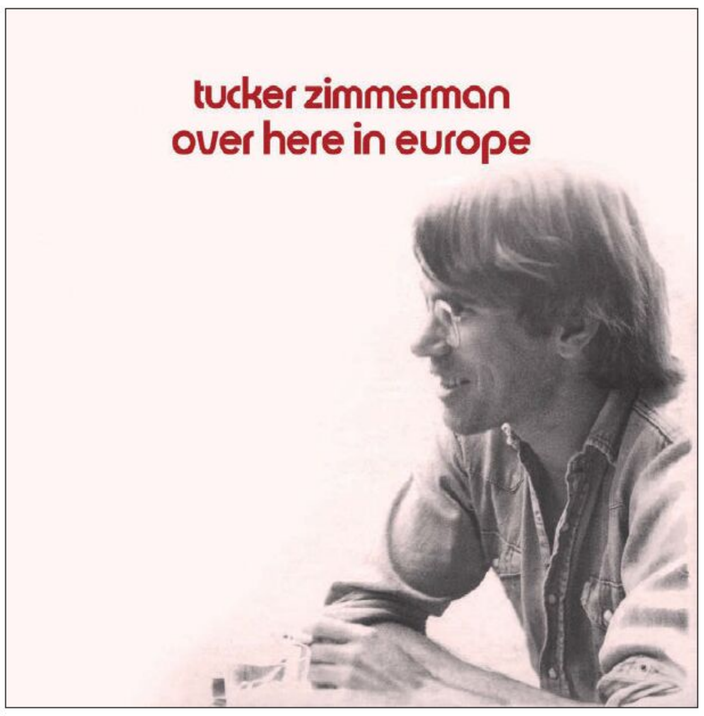


"I'd never touched a synth before." Tucker Zimmerman rewrites the rules while making *Over Here In Europe*, 1974

Spinning Through Empty Space

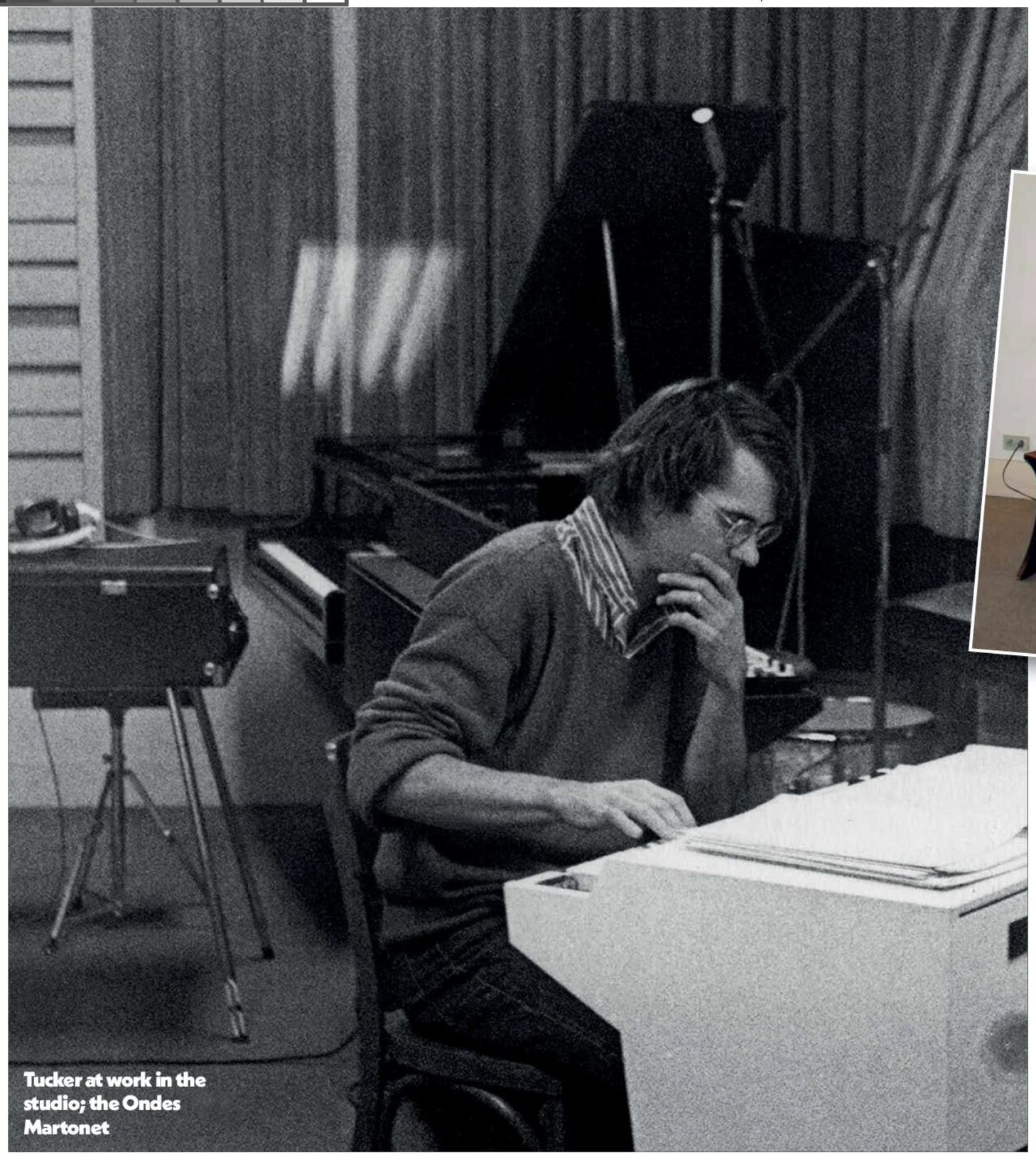
While self-described "song poet" Tucker Zimmerman's ***OVER HERE IN EUROPE*** is a folky rumination on American history, it was recorded in Paris with early electronic instrument the Ondes Martenot.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS gets deep into the making of a unique artefact



"I didn't really decide. The opportunity was handed to me, and I couldn't say no," says the American singer-songwriter Tucker Zimmerman of the making of his third album. "The man behind the project was Jean-Paul Bariolade. He owned a small record label in Paris, and he came to me in Belgium and asked me to produce a single, 'Les Fous de Bassan', by the Breton folk singer Serge Kerval. I'd never been asked to produce a track of another's music and to this day I do not consider myself to be a record producer. But somehow that single worked out and a couple of months later – this was in 1972 – I was back in Paris producing an album with Kerval [his self-titled '74 effort]. Songs about seagulls and French rivers with flutes and bagpipes. I lost track of the album after it was released, but shortly after, Jean-Paul invited me back to Paris to record an album of my own songs."

Having recorded *Ten Songs* with Tony Visconti in London, released on Fly in '69, along with the uptempo 'Red Wind' / 'Moondog' single, followed by the primitively recorded, but genuinely effective and poetic, German self-titled album in '72, *Over Here In Europe* marked a very different



Tucker at work in the studio; the Ondes Martonet

"I first started experimenting with tape and electronics in San Francisco when I was a student. I thought of it as a sideshow attraction"

sound and outlook for the formerly flaxen-haired hippie.

Staying for one week in an old hotel on Rue de Prague, near the eight-track studio in Gare de Lyons, a crack band were waiting, and work proceeded quickly. "Jean-Paul hired a bass player and drummer," says Zimmerman of the session men. Drummer Gérard Berlioz had recently recorded the crate digger fave, *Pop Organ & Percussion*, for Atlantic with Michel Estellet-Brun in '72.

"At the end of the week we brought in an Ondes Martenot. This was a dream of mine for years. I first heard the Ondes on a recording of Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony*, this was in my student years in San Francisco, and the sound of the instrument haunted me forever after. When I got to London with my songs in '68, my first request to Tony Visconti when we were preparing to record *Ten Songs* was 'Please find me an Ondes Martenot.' Tony could not find one. I learned later that you had to go to Paris and talk to the man, Jacques Martenot, himself to even have a hope of getting the sound of his Ondes on tape. When Jean-Paul invited me to record *Over Here in Europe,* my first request was that he track down an Ondes, and I would make that the central sound of the songs. It didn't quite work out that way. The Ondes was late getting to the studio, and it came with a performer. Martenot did not want a stranger playing his instrument. I could not even get close to it once it was installed with its array of speakers at the far end of the studio. I had to communicate with the player from a distance and he worked from the scores I wrote for the arrangements. In the end, everything worked out fine and I was even able to write an 'Ondes Quartet?' for one of the songs ['The Girl Who Cried My Tears']. The Ondes is a monophonic keyboard instrument and though I was not able to experiment with it in the studio I scored its lines as I would a synthesiser. Because at first, I was not sure if we could get the Ondes for the sessions, I asked Jean-Paul to bring in a synthesiser. It turned out to be an ARP 2000-something and I spent hours before and after each day's session experimenting with its sounds. I'd never touched a synth before either (they were quite expensive in those years – and still monophonic), so that was another wonderful exploration. I think I did a pretty good job of combining the sounds of those two electronic instruments."

Although informed by the "electronic" aspect of the limited access to the hallowed Ondes Martenot and the ARP, instead of following the musical explorations of Vangelis (himself based in Paris) *Over Here In Europe* follows the trajectory of Zimmerman's previous album's storytelling acoustic motifs, with occasional subtle electronic embellishments. Opening track 'Good Old Days' is Gaelic in charm, but also so very American, a little like Nilsson in a head-on collision with UK singer Peter Sarstedt. It's a beguiling sound that is a progression from the hippy-style folk of his previous two albums.

Second track 'Oregon' has something of the mood of *Scott 4*, its lyrics of Americana juxtaposing nicely with the light-funk of the bass and drums, acoustic guitar and the almost Joe Meek-like use of the synth. For 'The Girl Who Cried My Tears' he treated the four lines played by the Ondes like a string quartet. "There was nothing to think up. No mystery. In '63 I was commissioned by The San Francisco Symphony to compose a string quartet. It took me a year to write it and then I saw (guided) the piece through several performances in the Bay Area. I'm no string quartet expert but I know my way around its main paths and alleyways."

Zimmerman's partner Marie-Claire, who he met in '67 whilst studying in Rome, also contributes vocals to the album. "Ever since Marie-Claire and I have been together she's been singing along with me at home when I'm working on a song. On this album she just stepped up to an open microphone, put on the headphones and sang along. She was with me every minute in the studio that week. She also joined me on stage for a few songs in the years that followed."

From the heady Dylan-ish folk-rock of his first two records *Over Here In Europe* is a delightfully normal-yet-strange album, the songs very American in nature, the accompaniments both old-timey and french, the electronics, orchestral yet experimental. Three listens in and you get it, your ears adjust, and you can then adore the songs for what they are. In Zimmerman's canon of work this is the most unique record, and it sounds excellent; simplistic but with a soundstage of instrumentation that truly belongs to this one alone.

Post-hippy burn-out American laments honed in rural Belgium sound like this. S!

With thanks to Nick Holton for interviewing Tucker Zimmerman

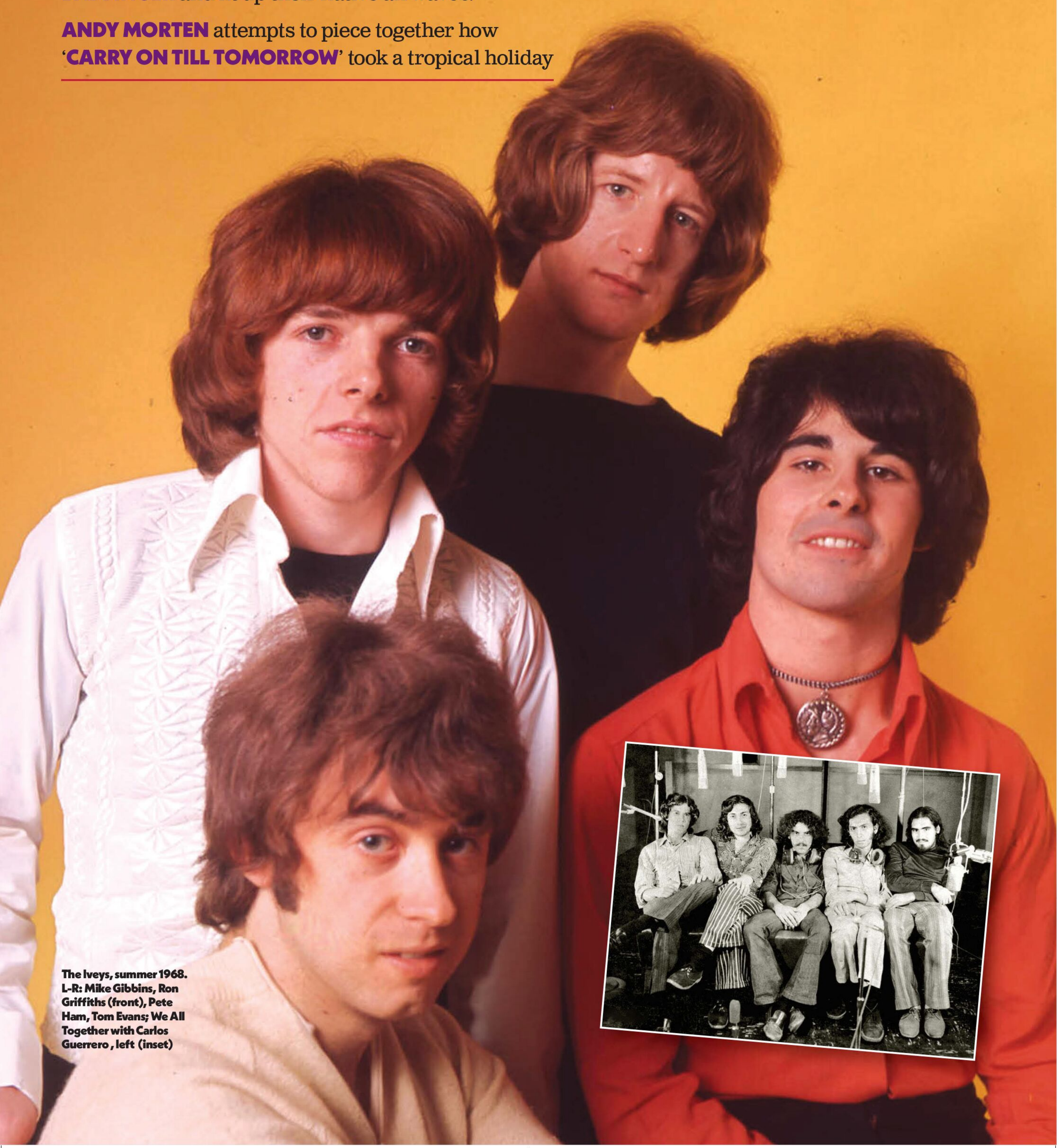
Over Here In Europe is out on 18th August on Big Potato

back to back

Niña De Mis Ojos

With its native music industry under the watchful eye of a dictatorship, Peruvian record buyers often couldn't lay their hands on the musical delights of 1971. Step forward Lima studio aggregation **WE ALL TOGETHER**, who took a hastily written film theme by Apple Records protégés **BADFINGER** and lit up their native airwaves.

ANDY MORTEN attempts to piece together how '**CARRY ON TILL TOMORROW**' took a tropical holiday



The Iveys, summer 1968. L-R: Mike Gibbins, Ron Griffiths (front), Pete Ham, Tom Evans; We All Together with Carlos Guerrero , left (inset)

CARRY ON TILL TOMORROW

By Badfinger

First released: *Magic Christian Music*, Apple, January 1970

After The Beatles had gathered at John Lennon's home at Tittenhurst Park on Friday 22nd August 1969 for what would turn out to be their last ever photo session, Paul McCartney hopped in his green Mini Cooper S DeVille and returned to London to oversee an afternoon recording session with Apple signings The Iveys. Three weeks earlier, with his full cooperation, The Iveys had cloned McCartney's demo of 'Come And Get It' for use on the soundtrack of *The Magic Christian*, a satirical comedy film co-starring Ringo Starr and set for release in December. McCartney was tasked with composing material for the film but was so impressed by The Iveys' work that he convinced United Artists to allow them to take his place, under his full supervision.

After seeing a rough cut of the film's downbeat opening sequence in which Starr echoes his famously hungover riverside scene in *A Hard Day's Night*, Iveys guitarists Pete Ham and Tom Evans went home to the group's shared house in Golders Green and set about writing a suitable song. "Paul gave us his impression," Tom Evans recalled in *Without You: The Tragic Story Of Badfinger* (Dan Matovina, 1997), "mentioning a Simon & Garfunkel type of style. Pete and I wrote 'Carry On Till Tomorrow', which we were pleased with. Paul liked the song and brought us into Abbey Road Studios. He gave us leeway, added a few ideas, and produced it. He was very free in his approach." Pete and Tom's demo can be heard on the 2022 CD *Golden Delicious Demos (1966-69): The Iveys Anthology Vol 3*.

'Carry On Till Tomorrow' is a slow-burning minor-key ballad that features a mournful Tom Evans lead vocal and soaring group harmonies, punctuated by two cutting lead guitar solos by Pete. The Iveys recorded nine takes of the song during the two-hour session, with take nine being deemed the best. Beatles aide Mal Evans presented an acetate to George Martin on Monday 25th, and Martin recorded the sweeping orchestral arrangement over the following two days in Abbey Road. Less than a week from conception to completion. Next!

By the time the film premiered on 12th December, The Iveys had shed bassist Ron Griffiths, changed their name to Badfinger and their version of 'Come And Get It' had been released as a single on Apple. It would soar into the US and UK Top 10s and assure the group some sort of future, albeit one that none of them could've anticipated at the time. Nine days into the new decade, their debut album – clumsily titled *Magic Christian Music* and cobbled together from various '69 recordings and half the content of The Iveys' album *Maybe Tomorrow*, the July '69 UK release of which had been cancelled by Apple – was rushed out. McCartney and Martin's credits on 'Carry On Till Tomorrow' are missing.

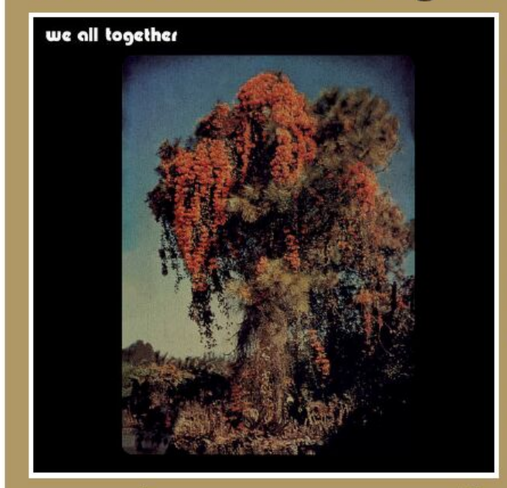
Shine On: A Tribute To Pete Ham is out now on Y&T Music

"Paul liked the song and brought us into Abbey Road Studios. He gave us leeway, added a few ideas, and produced it"
Tom Evans

CARRY ON TILL TOMORROW

By We All Together

First released: *We All Together*, Mag, June 1972



Having helmed various beat and rock bands in the Peruvian capital Lima since the mid-60s, brothers Saúl and Manuel Cornejo found themselves at a crossroads in 1971 when prog-pop quintet Laghonia called it a day. During the final sessions for their second album *Etcetera*, they'd met Carlos Guerrero, musical protégé and son of record label director Manuel Antonio Guerrero (the label is named after his initials), who contributed to the album before suggesting they record two Wings songs and two Badfinger songs as a studio experiment. The trio recruited bassist Ernesto Samamé and keyboard player Félix Varvarande and became We All Together, their mission: to record note-perfect, high-fidelity versions of Beatles-adjacent material that wasn't available in Peru. "The group isn't into presentations or shows," stated Saúl at that time, "we're about recording music and purifying it to the max."

Apple Records' ties with the multi-national EMI group meant that the label's roster was manufactured in countless territories worldwide, ensuring massive exposure for not only the solo Beatles but other Apple artists. Yet, while Wings' '71 debut *Wild Life* and Badfinger's *Magic Christian Music* were released in several South American countries, Peru's government under radical nationalist president Juan Velasco Alvarado had other ideas, favouring homegrown traditions over cultural imports. We can only assume that Guerrero Jr got his hands on copies of the records from neighbouring Ecuador and Brazil, or that he brought them back from his recent trip to the US.

The quartet of highly melodic, radio-friendly selections – Paul & Linda's 'Tomorrow' and 'Some People Never Never Know', and Badfinger's 'Carry On Till Tomorrow' and 'Walk Out In The Rain' – was duly recorded and released as two singles in '72. Carlos's lead vocal recalls Lennon, McCartney and Gilbert O'Sullivan (an unlikely influence at the time) without resorting to slavish parody, and the musicians are clearly having the time of their life experimenting with the state-of-the-art equipment that Estudios Mag in Lima offered. (Mag also owned mixing, mastering and cutting facilities, becoming a *bona fide* independent industry without interference from the government.) When We All Together's music was played on Lima's radio station, listeners were convinced they were hearing a foreign group, so convincing was Guerrero's English accent and the high quality of recording.

We All Together soon outgrew its tribute band origins for '72's self-titled long-player, on which the Wings and Badfinger songs were joined – and possibly bettered – by half a dozen English-language originals that drew from the same well of influences and led to the sophistication of '74's *Volumen II* – itself closely followed by a farewell EP containing Badfinger's 'Rock Of All Ages' and two more Wings songs. The following year, Alvarado was overthrown amid widespread riots and looting in Lima. Carlos Guerrero reformed We All Together in '90 and continues to perform and record. It seems some people *do* know how to carry on.

We All Together Volume II is out now on Munster

"The group isn't into presentations or shows, we're about recording music and purifying it to the max"
Saúl Cornejo

deep cuts

The Genuine Article

As prolific and arguably as influential as their West Coast counterparts The Beach Boys, **THE FOUR SEASONS** have rarely been afforded the same kudos or retrospective acclaim. Keyboard player Bob Gaudio's songwriting smarts remain virtually unparalleled in '60s/'70s pop; his creations – often tossed away on Four Seasons B-sides and albums – became monsters for The Walker Brothers, Tremeloes, Andy Williams and the group's own frontman Frankie Valli, as well as minor hits for Grapefruit and Timebox.

Their songbook provided rich pickings for countless aspiring acts, as demonstrated by our deep dive

THE FALLING LEAVES
Beggars Parade
(A-side, Decca, June 1966)

Over two years before The Four Seasons turned hippy-baiting social commentary into an art form on *The Genuine Imitation Life Gazette*, Bob Gaudio and regular co-writer/Four Seasons producer Bob Crewe aimed their critical sights at beatnik culture on this biting satire from January 1966's *Working My Way Back To You And More Great New Hits*. "Why should you work, like the rest / When it's easier to protest?" they ask, singling out the "Bowery bum" and "banker's son" who "make excuses 'cause you just can't make the grade". It's impossible to pinpoint whether it was intended as a vogue-ish protest song, although the delivery smacks of Sonny & Cher and The Byrds. Unknown UK band The Falling Leaves (who may or may not be the same Falling Leaves responsible for January '65's rare mod/KPM favourite 'She Loves To Be Loved') cut the song for this superb Mike Leander-directed single.

BARRY LEE SHOW
Everybody Knows My Name
(A-side, Columbia, July 1967)

Also sourced from *Working My Way Back To You And More Great New Hits* and bearing similar hallmarks of Dylan-esque folk-rock to 'Beggars Parade', 'Everybody Knows My Name' is a prescient rumination on the hollowness of fame and fortune. The protagonist reels off a list of his achievements before deciding that "the glamour don't mean anything". "You've got a home / And a family," he rues in the chorus. "Well, you've got much more than me." Norfolk band Barry Lee Show's popular stage act of music and comedy caught the ear of producer Norman Smith, who cut half a dozen sides with them in between sessions for *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*. 'Everybody Knows My Name' became their first single and, despite the obvious commercial appeal of both song and performance (reminiscent of John Carter's many mid-60s studio creations), led a string of six singles into obscurity.

THE SYMBOLS
Bye Bye Baby
(A-side, President, July 1967)

A rare entry in our list in that it charted in the UK (a resounding #44), 'Bye Bye Baby' (with the suffix '(Baby Goodbye)') had been a US #12 hit in early 1965 for The Four Seasons and was immortalised on The Bay City Rollers' chart-topping version 10 years later. British home counties vocal harmony group The

Everybody knows their name. The Four Seasons in 1966. L-R: Bob Gaudio, Frankie Valli, Tommy DeVito, Joe Long

"'American Crucifixion Resurrection' becomes 'Transit', an ambitious choice for an A-side with its several different musical parts and five minute-plus playing time"

Symbols were tasked by President boss Edward Kassner to record US hits that hadn't caught on over here; their assured reading of 'Bye Bye Baby' followed stabs at 'See You In September' (The Happenings) and preceded '(The Best Part Of) Breakin' Up' (The Ronettes). In a cruel twist of fate, Symbols bassist Mick Clarke introduced Symbols' stage favourite 'Silence Is Golden' to The Tremeloes while briefly depping for them in '66.

JACKIE LOMAX
Genuine Imitation Life
(A-side, CBS, October 1967)

Eighteen months before it became the (almost) title track of *The Genuine Imitation Life Gazette*, album lyricist Jake Holmes included his version on the stripped-down *"The Above Ground Sound" Of Jake Holmes* (an album mostly remembered these days for containing the original 'Dazed And Confused', famously pilfered by Led Zeppelin). Liverpudlian journeyman singer Jackie Lomax quickly cut the song for his Robert Stigwood-produced solo debut. Despite Lomax's powerful vocal and Bee Gees arranger Bill Shepherd's typically OTT string section, neither the song nor the recording was designed for radio play or mass consumption and Lomax moved into a creatively satisfying but commercially unyielding spell at Apple Records with the support of three Beatles.

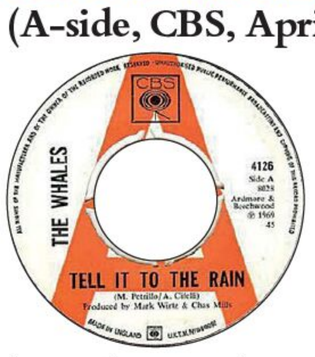
THE ROCKIN' BERRIES
Dawn (Go Away)
(A-side, Pye, November 1967)

By 1967 Brum beat merchants The Rockin' Berries had made the in-house switch from Piccadilly to Pye but, plagued with an unstable line-up (in a year they would lose singer Geoff Turton, to pursue a solo career in the guise of Jefferson), the hits continued to elude them, so a decision to tackle a three-year-old release whilst contemporaries had the grace to take on The Four Seasons' current catalogue is a mystery. Sadly, a mighty John Schroeder production, Turton's failsafe falsetto and some chunky guitar runs (albeit a little buried) do little to invigorate the Berries' perambulation through this former chart-topper.

DAISY & ARTHUR
Let's Ride Again
(B-side, Dynovoice, May 1968)

Another unknown quantity, but given the Bob Crewe production credit and the high standard of the performances, it's likely that this was a studio one-shot concocted by session players for Crewe's Dynovoice imprint. On the topside Daisy and Arthur offer energised vocal interplay on a dancefloor-friendly Stax-style soul interpretation of Chuck Berry's 'School Days'; the model is continued on the flip, originally the B-side of The Four Seasons' June 1967 single 'C'mon Marianne'. The tempo is faster, the backbeat more brutal and the arrangement awash with brass and fuzz guitar, rendering the song – itself heavy on stylistic nods to Marvin Gaye's 'Ain't That Peculiar' – almost unrecognisable.

THE WHALES
Tell It To The Rain
(A-side, CBS, April 1969)

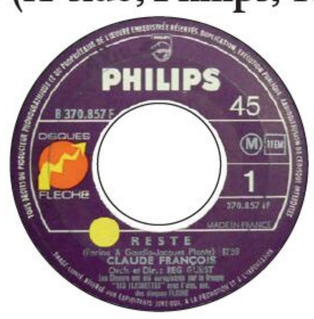


Produced by Mark Wirtz and Chas Mills and featuring a young Chris Spedding on guitar, The Whales appears to have been a front for yet another hit-seeking studio outfit and this, their second single release of three, is a venerable stab at occasional Seasons collaborators Mike Petrillo and Chubby Cifelli's beaming sunshine-soul opus. Notching the pace down a tad from the original 1966 Top 10 hit, the Wirtz wall of sound doesn't quite match the sparkle of Bob Gaudio's, yet thanks to Spedding's 12-string guitar break and a strong vocal, it falls just short of being *Top Of The Pops* album facsimile fayre.

THE SHYANNES
Goodbye Girl
(A-side, Date, 1969)

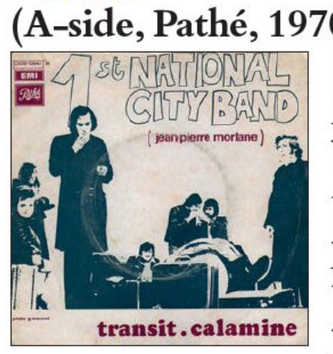
Pop covers act The Shyannes were wildly popular in their native Durban in the mid to late '60s, appearing regularly at the city's first teen entertainment club Tiles. Few South African bands made any kind of splash overseas at the time (the John Kongos-led Scrugg and Sharon Tandy to the UK, and The Flame to the US via London being notable exceptions), so it's something of a mystery how The Shyannes' only single – a confident take on this highlight from The Four Seasons' 1967 album *New Gold Hits* – appeared on CBS's Date imprint in South Africa and nowhere else. Flip the single over (if you can find one!) for further evidence of the group's abilities on tough dancefloor-filler 'Soul Beat'.

CLAUDE FRANÇOIS
Reste
(A-side, Philips, 1969)



Most Shindiggers will already be familiar with UK band Timebox's vibe-tastic cover of 'Beggin'', which is why we're eschewing that version here and instead focusing on this just-about-as-danceable reading by French pop star Claude François. Included on his 1968 LP *Eloïse* but sounding better on a 45 from Belgium or promo-only single from France, 'Reste' features a new French lyric by Jacques Plante and musical direction/orchestration by British arranger Reg Guest. Typical of the full-on French productions of the period, it's a lush recording with a delightfully plucky bassline and triumphant horns and strings. The groovy breakdown section where bongos and xylophone are joined by clattering drums creates a few heady bars ripe for sampling.

1ST NATIONAL CITY BAND
Transit
(A-side, Pathé, 1970)



The Genuine Imitation Life Gazette packs more bangs-for-your-buck than almost any other pop-psych LP out there, with first pressings usually available for not much more than the price of a Sunday newspaper. France's 1st National City Band were clearly fans, since both sides of their sole 45 feature cover versions from the album. In their hands, 'American Crucifixion Resurrection' becomes 'Transit', an ambitious choice for an A-side with its several different musical parts and five minute-plus playing time. The up-tempo opening section rocks nicely, the orchestral arrangement is as widescreen as the original, and we're treated to more of that plucky French bass sound. B-side 'Calamine' ('Genuine Imitation Life') is worthy of attention too. S!

Contributors: Andy Morten, Andrew Ure, Louis Wiggett

Working Our Way Back To You: The Ultimate Collection is out now on Madfish

Free spirit. Ronnie Lane sets off on his own adventure

How Come?

Ostracised by his band mates in The Faces, and enamoured of his new wife and son, in 1973 **RONNIE LANE** traded stadium tours for rural seclusion, psychic readings and "ordinary trousers".

In this extract from their new Lane biography, **CAROLINE** and **DAVID STAFFORD** chronicle his grass-roots aggregation Slim Chance's inauspicious debut

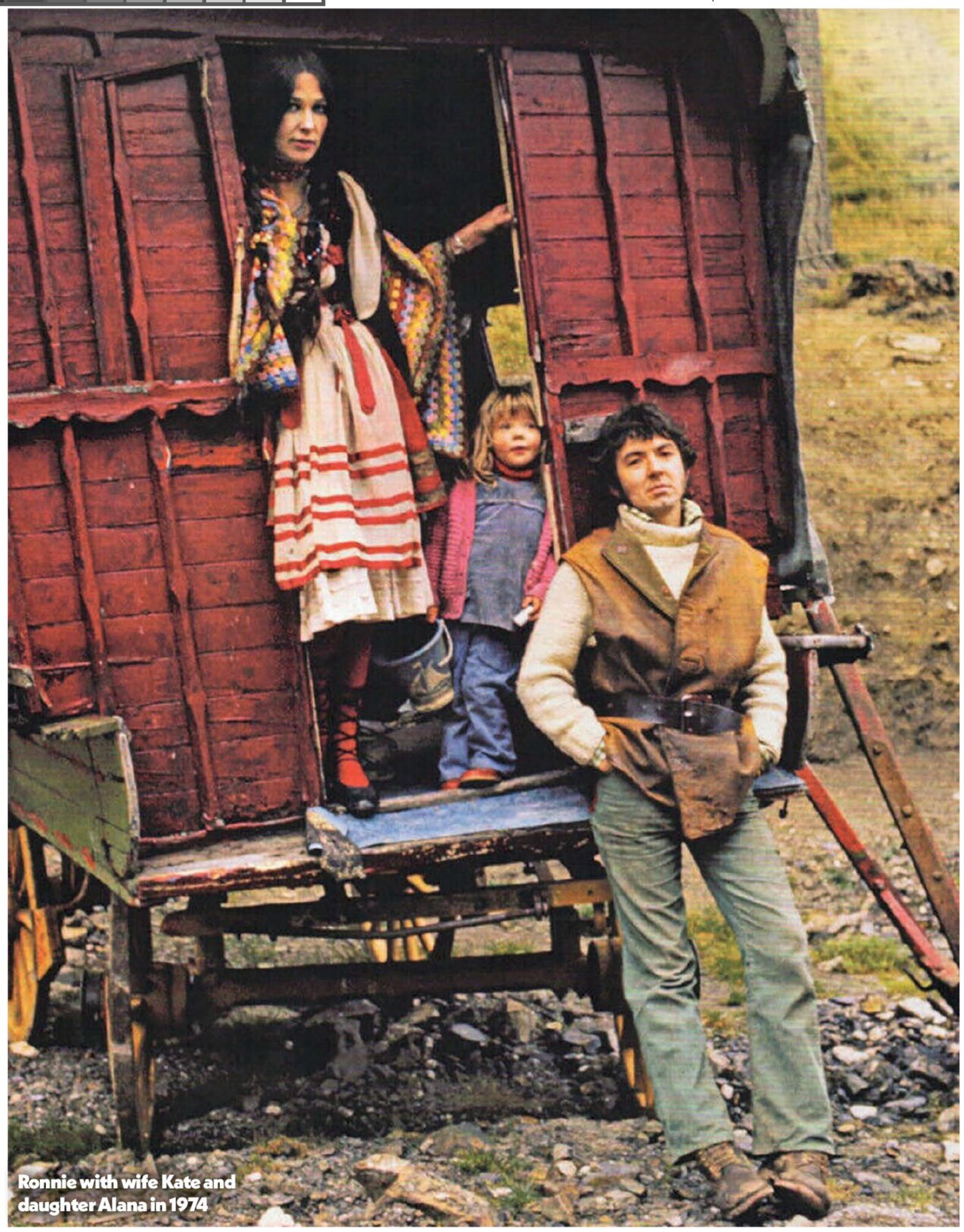
The times had indeed changed. The gloss was going out of glam and being replaced with earth tones. In July 1973, Ziggy Stardust played his last gig. His estranged cousin, Alvin, kept going for a little longer, but eventually even he realised there was a limit to the number of coos you can coo ca choo.

You can, it's said, go blind if you spend too long looking at shiny satin on stage. Chiffon scarves are a tripping hazard. Feather boas cause allergies. Fairport Convention never went near anything shiny. They wore ordinary clothes and possibly got their trousers out of a Littlewood's catalogue. Pentangle looked like people you sometimes saw in Basildon on Sunday afternoons, cleaning cars and mowing lawns. The Band, in America, when they dressed up at all, dressed up as 19th century dirt farmers who had more dirt than they knew what to do with. They also proved that there is a world of difference between having a beard and just not bothering to shave ever.

And different sorts of music came from these people, folksier, rootsier, smellier tunes that, rather than the '59 Les Paul and Marshall stack and the 58-piece drum kit with Rank Organisation gong behind it, favoured things that went wheeze, whee, zooch, plink and, perhaps most significantly, plonk.

There were questions of scale to be considered, too. Pub-rock bands like Brinsley Schwarz, Kilburn & The High Roads and Eggs Over Easy had proved you could make wonderful music in ordinary trousers, build fantastic relationships with audiences, shift a few records and perhaps even survive financially playing modest venues about the place without hype, pizazz, pantechnicons full of gear, or private jets with built-in water beds.

Ronnie Lane craved that ordinary



Ronnie with wife Kate and daughter Alana in 1974

"He would come onstage and do that little step dance of his and everyone just loved him" Graham Lyle

trousers music. His wife Kate moved into Wick Cottage, the place in the grounds of Ron Wood's house, with Ronnie. In August, she gave birth to their son, Luke Kito Lane.

The next day, still drunk from the celebrations (he had crashed his car on the way back from the hospital), Ronnie went into Olympic Studios where his old friend Glyn Johns was working with Benny Gallagher and Graham Lyle, two Scottish musicians who had been founding members of McGuinness Flint.

At Glyn's request, Ronnie played a few of the things he'd been working on, including a folksy English honky-tonk number called 'How Come?' that he'd written with Kevin Westlake, an Irish born drummer/guitarist/songwriter who'd been knocking about the music scene for years. Glyn liked it, as did Gallagher and Lyle. They set about gathering a band of musicians to record it. Steve Simpson, a fiddle/mandolin/guitar player who'd worked with various outfits including Joe Brown's short-lived Brown's Home Brew, was playing at The Barmy Arms in Twickenham, "When a little guy in a green velvet drape jacket stepped up for a chat. He said he was making a record and asked whether I'd like to play on it. This guy turned out to be Ronnie Lane, who then loaded up his pockets with several bottles of barley wine and led me off to Wick Cottage, where he played me a rough of 'How Come?' and introduced me to Kate and one-week-old Luke."

Other recruits included Billy Livsey, a keyboard player from St Louis, Missouri; drummer Bruce Rowland from Joe Cocker's Grease Band and Fairport Convention; the aforementioned Kevin Westlake; Benny Gallagher on piano accordion; Graham Lyle on mandolin; and Chris Stewart, another Irishman, formerly with Eire Apparent, on bass. Ronnie didn't want to play bass anymore. He'd recast himself as rhythm guitarist.

When the track was done, he took it to Billy Gaff, who, with Brian Hutch, had started a record label – GM Records. Mr Gaff said, "Yes, please."

Ronnie, always the mystic, felt he was being influenced by the spirit world. The pocket watch that his father had given him kept stopping. He would look at it and see it was wrong, so put it away, but then the next time he looked at it, it would show the right time, as if somebody had put it right. When he mentioned it to one of his and Kate's old Meher Baba gang, they sent him to a psychic called Dodo.

Russ Schlagbaum remembers that Ronnie went to see "this tiny little creature who lived in East Twickenham in a huge old Victorian house that was as cold as a refrigerator. Dodo told Ronnie, 'There's someone from your past who's trying to get your attention, and he's using this watch as a means of doing so. He was a travelling showman; and I'm not quite sure what it was he wanted to tell.'"

Oo-er. The fact that this "someone from your past" was a showman and had been a traveller in Europe, convinced Ronnie (and Kate) that what had, up until now been a vague notion, was in fact his true destiny.

When Ronnie told Brian Hutch at GM Records that he wanted to travel the country as a musical circus under a tent, Mr Hutch confirmed that it was all meant to be because Mr Hutch was Circus Boy, brought up under the big top with the smell of sawdust and elephant shit in his nostrils. His parents were still circus people, working in France. So, he could introduce Ronnie to all the right people, some of whom could ride two horses at once, standing up. Others had very large shoes.

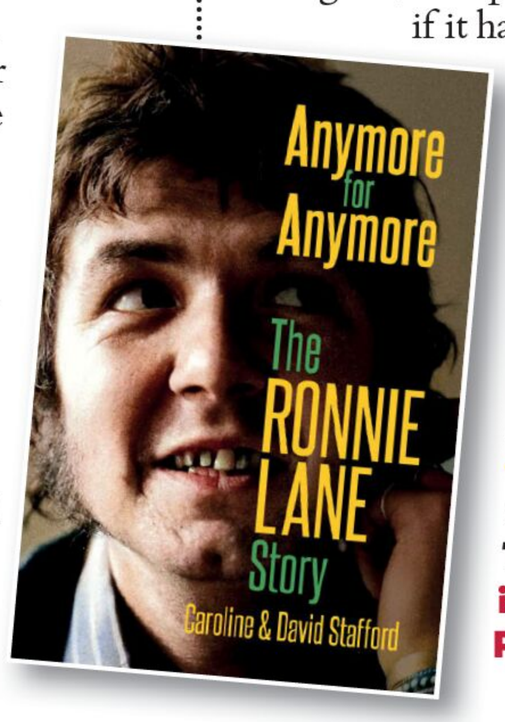
And so, it came to pass. On 5th November '73 – Guy Fawkes Night – Ronnie and his band appeared as part of the Penny For The Guy Festival in a Chipperfield's Circus tent on Clapham Common to debut their new act.

"Ronnie was amazing," Graham Lyle said. "He would come onstage and do that little step dance of his and everyone just loved him. He had something magic about him. He really did."

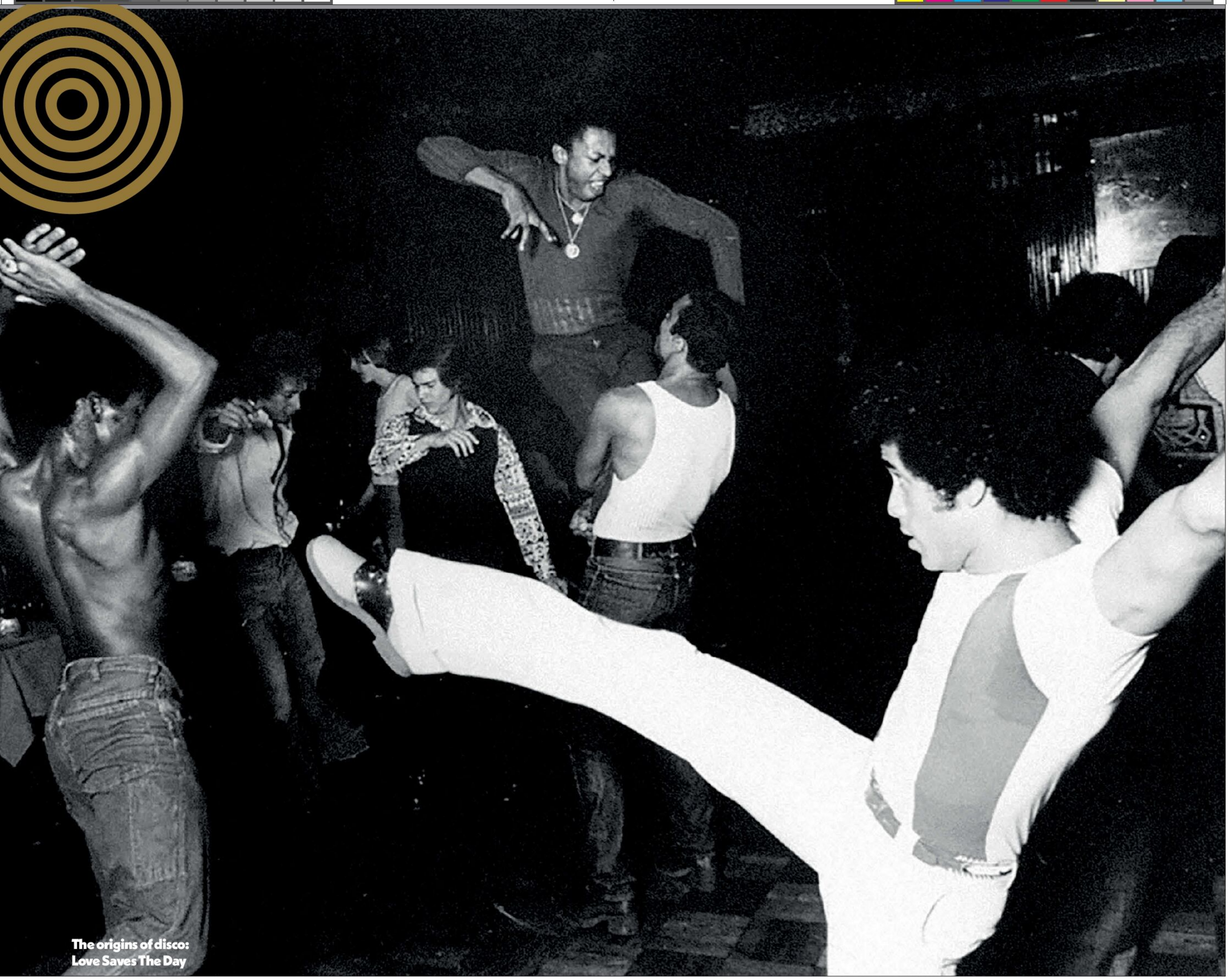
"The press turned out in force," drummer Bruce Rowland said. "The circus people rose to the occasion, with clowns, jugglers, tiger cubs and lion cubs. The atmosphere was sensational, and the music swung unbelievably."

When *Melody Maker* asked Ronnie how it had gone, he replied, "Oh, a shambles. But if it had been more professional, it wouldn't have been as good. The idea for the show has been in my mind for ages, but now it has come together just at the right time." S!

With thanks to Greg Morton



Anymore For Anymore: The Ronnie Lane Story is published by Omnibus Press on 17th August



The origins of disco: Love Saves The Day

Disco State Of Mind

By the late '70s, disco was beginning to die a death. Exclusivity and celebrity reigned in the clubs, while everyone from Ethel Merman to *The Muppets* were cashing in. It wasn't long before the backlash started to bite, most memorably in the form of the notorious "1979 Disco Sucks" rally in Comiskey Park and with the fearful combination of the Reagan administration and the AIDS epidemic round the corner – the disco landscape was about to change for good.

SARAH GREGORY goes back to where it started

Let's rewind a decade to when disco was nowhere and the era of "proto-disco" was just beginning to gain a foothold in New York City. Discotheques existed of course, Manhattan's The Peppermint Lounge or Arthur's to name but two, but they were few and far between sporting a clientele dressed for dinner not dancing. The Stonewall Riots are often credited with igniting the disco flame as repressed communities fought back but Stonewall certainly didn't mark a free pass for gay people or the birth of dancefloor society. What really did it was the all-encompassing influence of the counterculture – the community spirit and the rise of political and social activism, all of which was exploited to create a party environment soundtracked by a wonderful mix of soul, rock, funk, Brazilian and African music, jazz and psychedelia where people could celebrate each other.

Many can claim their part in the story of disco, but there are two key figures who were pivotal in its narrative and sparked this musical revolution. Native New Yorker David Mancuso had vigorously embraced The Summer Of Love and hippiedom for all it was worth. Regularly attending the psych-oriented Electric Circus and Fillmore East, he became a devotee of Timothy Leary and his LSD experiments. And it was this sense of freedom and community that Mancuso wanted to bring to the dancefloor. Taking his lead from the Harlem rent parties of the '20s, he held his first invite-only loft party *Love Saves The Day* in 1970 – a gathering that soon became better-known as The Loft.

In this environment of balloons, acid punch and camaraderie, Mancuso curated

Disco artists Moments Of Truth; singles that gained attention in the early days of The Loft: Auger, Chicago, Zep

"Mancuso curated a danceable soundtrack that ranged from Brian Auger & The Trinity's 'Listen Here' to Cymande's 'Bra'; from The Beatles' 'Here Comes The Sun' to Curtis Mayfield's 'Move On Up'"

a danceable soundtrack that ranged from Brian Auger & The Trinity's 'Listen Here' to Cymande's 'Bra'; from The Beatles' 'Here Comes The Sun' to Curtis Mayfield's 'Move On Up'. It was heavy on the soul and funk undoubtedly, but nothing was off limits if the host thought it was right. Ex-Temptation Eddie Kendricks was also a favourite with tracks including 'Date With The Rain' and 'Girl You Need A Change Of Mind', alongside Booker T, The Equals and War's 'City, Country, City'.

Meanwhile across Manhattan, Francis Grasso was introducing a similar dancefloor music policy to a much wider crowd at The Sanctuary – aptly situated in an old church (for the eagle-eyed, it features in the '71 movie *Klute*). Grasso would pick and choose songs that he thought the crowd needed to hear, while taking total control of his craft. Bridging the gap between funk and rock music to make one long danceable soundtrack, Hendrix's *Band Of Gypsys* was blended with James Brown's 'Cold Sweat', Zeppelin's 'Immigrant Song' with Rare Earth, Chicago's 'I'm A Man' with The Four Tops. Rock was ever-present, but the focus was on the groove and the beat. Once again, nothing was off limits.

As these parties started to be emulated both publicly and privately, clubs sprang up all over New York City and DJs (as they now were), became experts at unearthing hidden gems – genuine diggers. But this wasn't about finding the rarest or most exclusive records *a la* northern soul; this was about finding records that got people dancing and instilled an atmosphere of joy and togetherness. They also helped to broaden musical minds. These parties were undoubtedly the first time that records such as 'Jin-go-lo-ba' by Babatunde Olatunji or sax and vibist Manu Dibango's 'Soul Makossa' had been heard *en masse* and because of this went on to become huge records in their own right.

But by '73, while these pockets of people were gathering to dance to great records, no-one could have foreseen the worldwide domination that was to come. This is where the next part of the story comes in – courtesy of Philadelphia's long-standing soul tradition. In '71, songwriter and production duo Gamble & Huff were putting the finishing touches to new label Philadelphia International Records. Little did they know that they would inadvertently provide the template for what was to become *the* disco sound with session drummer Earl Young singlehandedly inventing the four to the floor beat on Harold Melvin & The Bluenotes' 'The Love I Lost'. As part of a legendary team that included Thom Bell on production duties, Norman Harris and Vince Montana Jr, who went on to build Salsoul Records, the MFSB (Mothers Father Sons Brothers or Motherfuckin' Sons Of Bitches) studio collective based at Philly's Sigma studios were responsible for some of the greatest soul/funk-disco crossover music by The O'Jays, The Stylistics and The Spinners – all of which was being played on the dancefloor by Mancuso, Grasso and all their acolytes.

This two-fold approach to underground "dance" music in the early '70s – exposure to multiple genres of danceable records and the new soul sound coming out of Philly – undoubtedly set the path for what was to become known as "disco" eventually leading to the dawn of a brand-new genre of music. When George McCrae's 'Rock Your Baby' – generally agreed to be the first "real" disco record – hit the charts in July '74, the floodgates opened.

The recent Bob Stanley-curated Ace Records compilation, *The Tribal Rites Of The New Saturday Night* is the latest tribute to this wonderful body of music – the title taken from British journo Nik Cohn's piece set around the Boroughs' disco scene and which inspired *Saturday Night Fever*. This new comp showcases the transition from "proto-disco" to "real-disco" as the world stood on the cusp of a musical takeover, providing a fantastic introduction to some of lesser-known tracks that were soon to be superseded. To paraphrase Ace themselves: Disco was the place not the music. S!

Tribal Rites Of The New Saturday Night is out now on Ace

20 questions

"First tenor usually does harmonies, so I naturally found those when we rehearsed" Mark Volman, the *other* tambourine man

Feel Older Now

From the whip-smart surf instrumentals of The Crossfires to the era-defining folk-rock of the early Turtles, and the sweetly humorous sunshine-laced pop of the later part of the decade, **MARK VOLMAN** experienced the '60s in the glare of white-hot change in American music. His '70s, working with Frank Zappa, Marc Bolan, Plastic Ono Band, Alice Cooper and numerous others, and a succession of albums with lifelong buddy Howard Kaylan as Flo & Eddie, was no less exciting.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS hears about harmonies, dis-harmony and being "kids who didn't know anything"

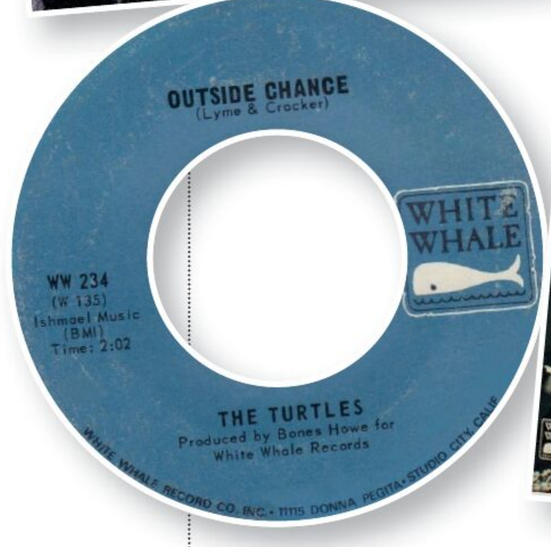
Shindig!: Growing up in California in the '50s. Was it the golden time we see portrayed in the movies and on TV?
Mark Volman: Southern California is where they filmed most of those shows, so visually my growing up experience was just like that. It was a time when everything was coming together: music, art, inventions. We had surfing, beach parties, car clubs, sock hops. Maybe it was just like television!

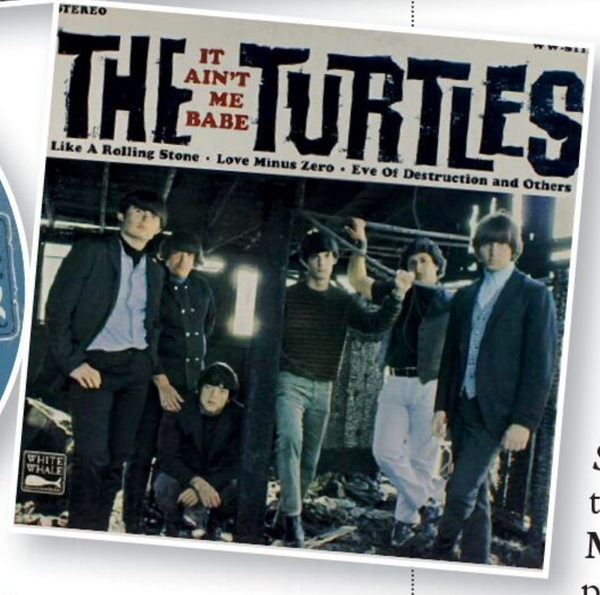
S!: After a name change to The Crossfires you took the raucous lead vocal on the frat-rock classic 'Justine'. How exciting were these early years?
MV: I was thrilled to be part of The Crossfires. I was thrilled to be part of anything! 'Justine' was just an old song that we did as a "party song" for the kids. I probably only started singing on that song because it had two parts, and we were singing more in our shows. We did The Righteous Brothers when they were doing '50s songs. We did a lot of covers then, just as The Beatles did.

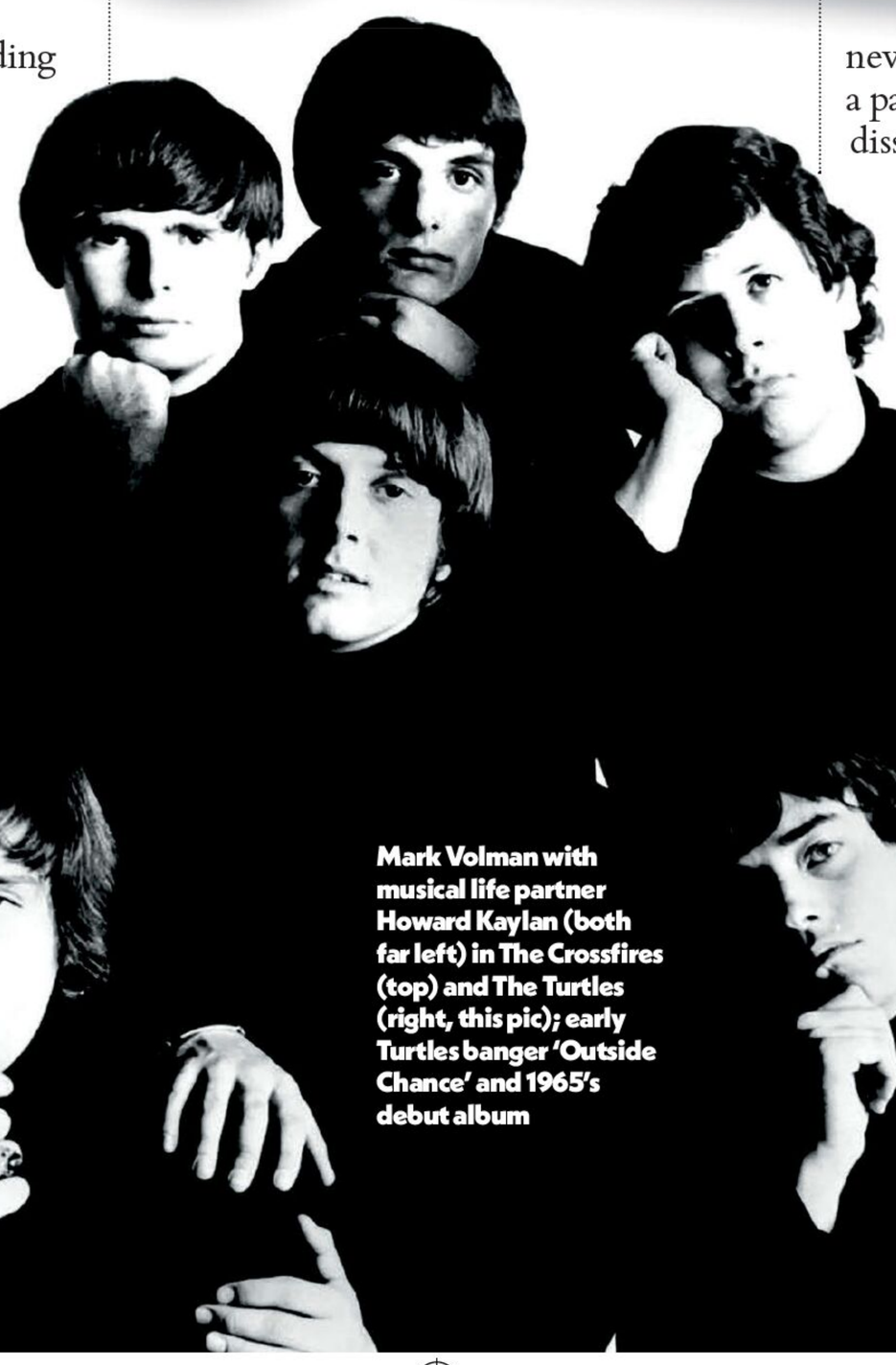
S!: When the band became The Turtles you switched to sharing lead vocals and found a harmonic match in Howard Kaylan. Was this a natural progression from having sung together in the Westchester High School choir?
MV: Dr Robert Wood was our choir teacher, and he put me as a first tenor and Howard as a second tenor (which was usually the lead melody). When we started adding singing to our shows, we were used to doing those two different parts. First tenor usually does harmonies, so I naturally found those when we rehearsed.

S!: You and Howard appeared to have a very easy-going stage persona from The Turtles' earliest performances – fun, rather than Mick Jagger surly. Did this evolve or were you both comfortable with each other?
MV: We were comfortable from the beginning because we had no trouble making fun of ourselves, along with anyone else. That's what made us unique.

S!: That said, the group looks mean and moody on the cover of 1965 debut *It Ain't Me Babe*. Was there some British Invasion or garage band attitude going on there, were you told to look that way or was it just how you were feeling by take 20?
MV: It's a little bit of all of those things. We had no idea what we were doing. The album had a lot of party songs, but the producer and White Whale Records kept telling us to look tough and stoic. "Get out of our turf!"







Mark Volman with musical life partner Howard Kaylan (both far left) in The Crossfires (top) and The Turtles (right, this pic); early Turtles banger 'Outside Chance' and 1965's debut album

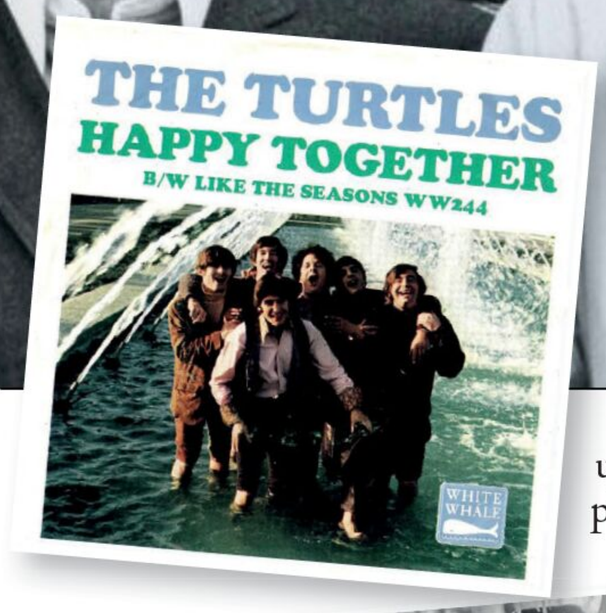
S!: 'Outside Chance' is one of our favourite Turtles singles and one of the first commercial recordings of a Warren Zevon song. How did you chance upon Zevon? Someone at Turtles HQ was very supportive of him – the band recorded 'Outside Chance' and 'Like The Seasons'. Was this just a case of helping a fellow White Whale artist, or were you and the band fans of his?
MV: Both. We were big fans of Warren's and those were both excellent songs. If he had written more for us to do, we would have recorded them. We were also trying to be writers ourselves, so that was probably a big deal. Warren may have thought, "I don't want to give up these songs to The Turtles anymore." He was signed to White Whale to make his own records, and we supported his career fully.

S!: The Turtles' 1967 album *Happy Together* saw drummer Johnny Barbata join the group and its more polished sound ushered in a year of big hit singles. Was '67 a good year for you personally?
MV: That year changed our lives completely. I got married. I bought a house. I had a child. I was on tour for most of the year. We had cheques that actually cashed. It was a groove. "It was a very good year."

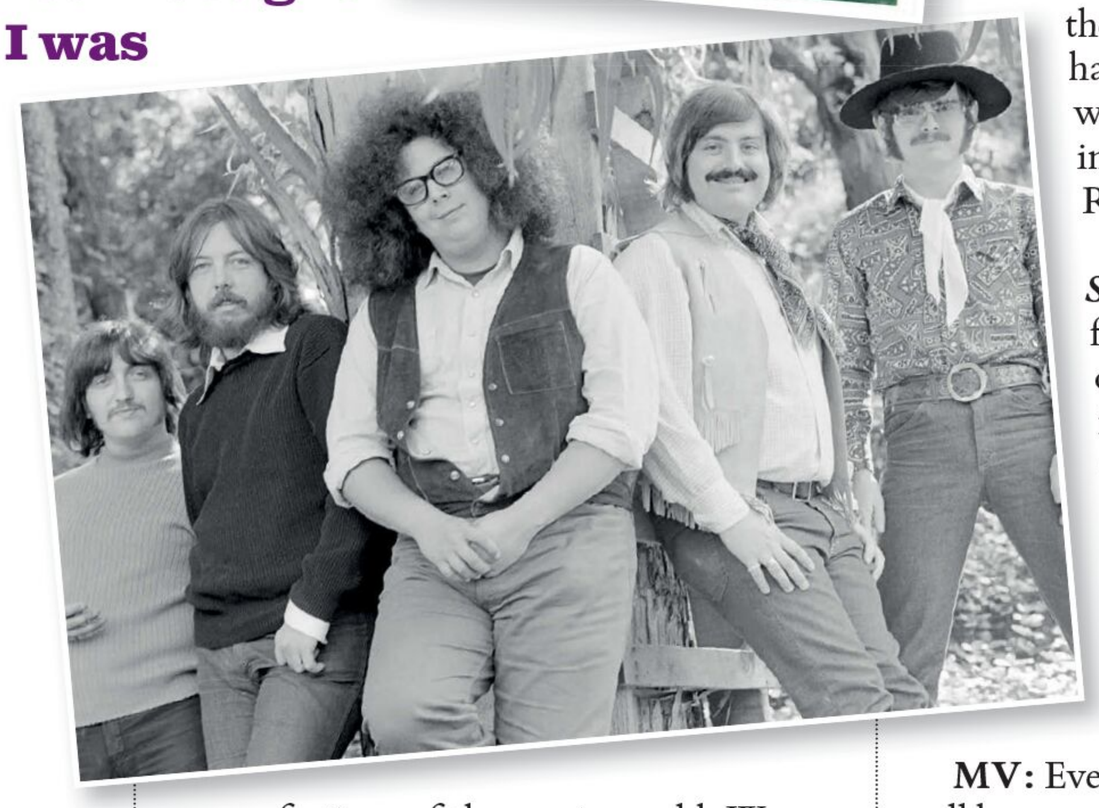
S!: What are your thoughts on the psychedelic revolution?
MV: My thoughts on the psychedelic revolution? I could never answer a question like that in a paragraph. I would need to write a dissertation on that.

S!: The Turtles came to London in 1967, the story of your journey being portrayed in the 2003 indie film *My Dinner With Jimi*. What are your memories of the trip and the events that unfolded?
MV: My key events were meeting up with Graham Nash, who found it in his better self to adopt The Turtles when we got there. He took us around. He took us to his house where he and John Lennon had taken some mind-expanding medicinals

The Turtles in London, June 1967. Top row, L-R: Howard Kaylan, Mark Volman, Johnny Barbata. Bottom row, L-R: Jim Tucker, Al Nichol, Jim Pons; '67 money-maker 'Happy Together'; Jim Seiter (left) joins for '69's *Turtle Soup*



"1967 changed our lives completely. I got married. I bought a house. I had a child. I was on tour for most of the year. We had cheques that actually cashed. It was a groove"



and painted an entire wall. Graham helped us meet people like Brian Jones and Paul and Ringo. He made us feel at home without taking away the excitement of being fans of the music.

S!: *The Turtles Present The Battle Of The Bands* introduces the arch humour and self-depreciation that both served the group well and possibly contributed to them not being taken seriously in certain factions of the music world. Were you ever concerned about what people thought of The Turtles or was that element of fun always paramount?

MV: Always paramount. We were not surly or hip. We were kids. We were growing up and having fun. It was sort of the plan to be thought of differently than all the other groups, especially in the UK, where The Beach Boys hadn't become huge stars yet. We were able to use those harmonies in 'Happy Together' and 'She'd Rather Be With Me'.

S!: *Turtle Soup* is many fans' favourite Turtles album and the only one entirely written by the five group members. Were you surprised when those quirky but endearing singles 'Love In The City' and 'You Don't Have To Walk In The Rain' failed to click, and the album bombed? How was Ray to work with?

MV: Everybody expected it to do well because we had Ray Davies of The Kinks producing it. I don't think we were shocked, but we were surprised when it didn't do well. We didn't get down on ourselves about it. We figured we just didn't strike the mark with it. We still think it's

a good record. Looking back, it's easy in hindsight to say it didn't have the magic. Ray only came over from England two or three times, so there was always a feeling of incompleteness.

The closer we got to finishing the album, the problems became more identifiable but harder to fix.

S!: What were your views on posthumous Turtles rarities album *Wooden Head* when it was released in 1970, and what do you think of it now? Did it represent the '65-66 era better than the first two albums?
MV: That was just a major catastrophe. To elaborate on the problems we were having would take way too long to talk about here. That album was never meant to be out as an album. It was a lot of one-song-here, one-song-there, band-breaking-up, record-company-falling-apart.

There are no pictures on the album. They didn't even contact us at this point to have us do album photos.

S!: Your problems with White Whale Records are well-known. Might the original Turtles have stayed together if you'd been on a more sympathetic label or was it time to make the change anyway?
MV: Both. At the same time, how can you speculate on that? We didn't know the difference at the time, but now I could say they didn't know how to be a record label and we were kids who didn't know anything.

S!: We're told that Frank Zappa was a musical perfectionist and a hard taskmaster but there must have been a fun side to working with him. Give us a feel-good Zappa story!
MV: First of all, Frank was great to work with. He was all the things at different times: funny, creative, probably the only person I'd call a genius. He brought out the best in Howard and me as singers. He let us, as well as the other group members, be leaders. We respected each other. He respected us. Consequently, he let Howard and I lead many of those albums. He wanted us all to have success. He just wasn't sure how to hold onto it once he got it.

S!: Flo & Eddie's backing vocals on T Rex's *Electric Warrior*, particularly on 'Life's A Gas', are unmistakable. Was it Bolan or Visconti that brought you to that particular session? Bolan was once described as "hard to like, but everyone did". Is that a fair description?
MV: Tony Visconti brought us in. We'd only done one song: 'Seagull Woman'. Marc liked that sound so much, he wanted that to be the sound of his music. He loved the high harmonies. Then we recorded 'Hot Love' with him in the studio and it became a hit. All the records were recorded with Marc and Tony together. We cut *Electric Warrior* practically live. Marc was a lovable person, but he was a little bit hard to get to know. We had already had success, so he was like a little brother to us. We gave him grief all the time.

S!: You initially wanted *The Phlorescent Leech & Eddie* to be released as a Turtles record. It certainly sounds like the direction the group was heading in. However, Warners wanted to cash in on your Zappa success, hence the Flo & Eddie moniker. There's amazing footage of you rocking out topless on *Beat Club* playing a really tough version of 'Feel Older Now'. That was a great rock 'n' roll band. Did you enjoy playing the guitar?
MV: I love playing guitar. It was my main instrument until *Moving Targets,* when I moved to piano. 'Feel Older Now' is a classic Flo & Eddie song and one of our best. It showed our maturity as songwriters, and we finally felt confident.

S!: The Flo & Eddie records contain numerous hidden treasures. How did you

"I love playing guitar!" Volman rocks out on stage as one half of Flo & Eddie with Kaylan

end up recording The Kinks' 'Days' and The Small Faces' 'Afterglow' 1972's self-titled album? You had a very anglophile sound. Intentional?

MV: It was very intentional. We saw cover songs as a way to prolong your career because it gave us the ability to record good songs, continue to change them, and grow with us. They're just a version of a great song. We also felt like we were introducing people to these great records we enjoyed. Peter Sarstedt's 'You're A Lady' never got enough credit, and we put it on our album and people still talk about our version.

S!: *Illegal, Immoral & Fattening* saw you change label to Columbia with the album's live segments returning to your Zappa-esque risqué humour, whist *Moving Targets* was straighter rock. 'Mama, Open Up' is excellent, and there's still a hint of The Turtles in the softer numbers. What direction did you think you should follow in the late '70s?

MV: We were looking to do more radio-friendly songs. We'd spent the last two years exposing ourselves on radio and with Frank working on *200 Motels*, so getting back to making straight-forward radio music is what we wanted to do. It's what we thought we did best.

S!: To say it took a while for you and Howard to wrestle back ownership of The Turtles' recordings would be an understatement! Are you happy with the way the group's legacy has been handled since 2017? Are there plans to reconstruct The Turtles' planned final album *Shell Shock*?

MV: We are happy with our legacy; we have complete control of what it is. We spent decades getting our music back and we will not lose it again.

We'd like to think we could put *Shell Shock* out, but it wouldn't be called that. With streaming, we could cut it up and make 100 songs on one album!

S!: You've enjoyed a long and varied career. What are the professional and personal highlights, whether in music or not? The sections in your book about returning to education and finding faith later in life are almost as fascinating as your musical adventures.

MV: I have fulfilled an awful lot of dreams. I put out a book this year (*Happy Forever*) and I'm very proud of that. I am proud that I had so many friends to be a part of it. You get to meet them as I have known them.

And after all these years, it means so much to me to be able to look back.

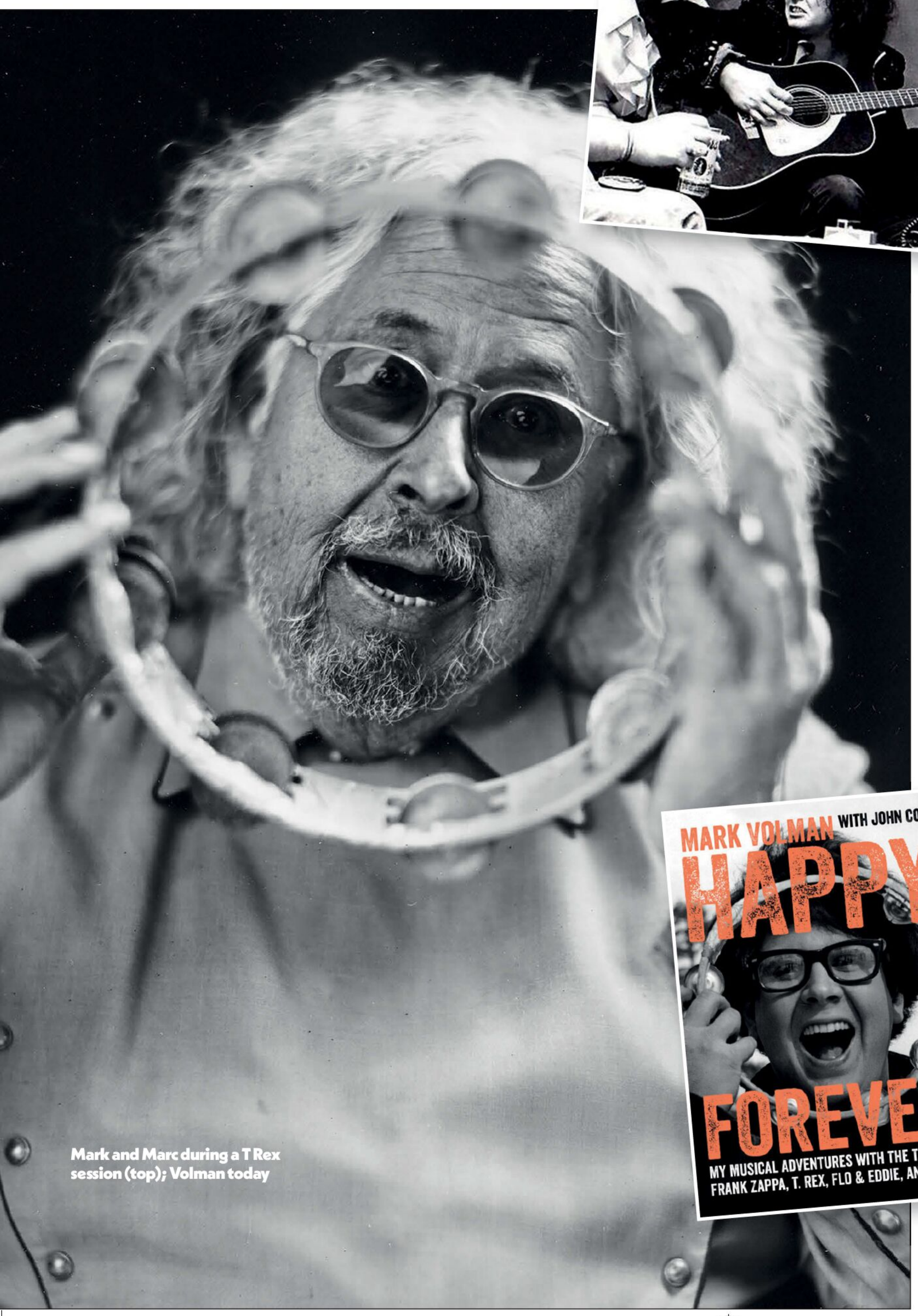
S!: Given this newfound faith and sobriety, are you able to look back on those periods of drink, drugs and debauchery with any perspective or do you prefer not to engage with it?

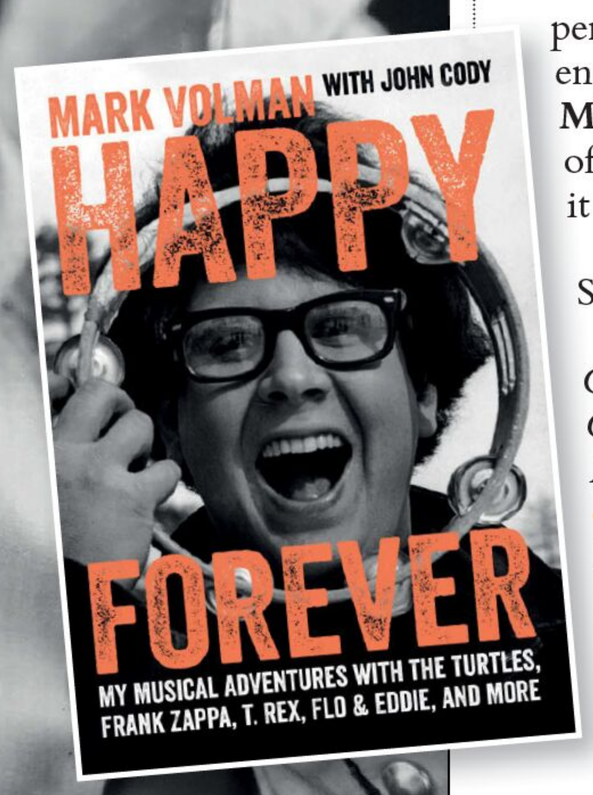
MV: I don't look back at it all that often. It was a moment. I can't change it and I wouldn't want to.

I do other drugs now, like Simvastatin, Metamucil and aspirin. S!

Contributors: Chris Groom, Peter Gallagher, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Andy Morten, Phil Suggitt

"Marc [Bolan] was a lovable person, but he was a little bit hard to get to know. We had already had success, so he was like a little brother to us"



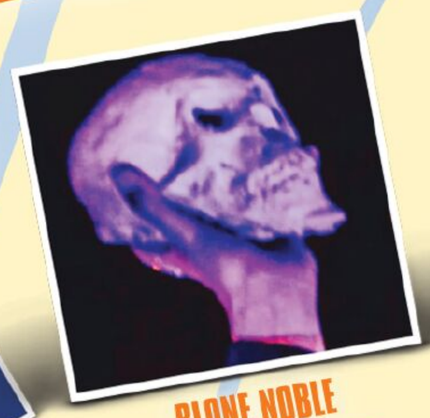


Mark and Marc during a T Rex session (top); Volman today

Happy Forever: My Musical Adventures With The Turtles, Frank Zappa, T Rex, Flo & Eddie And More is published by Jawbone

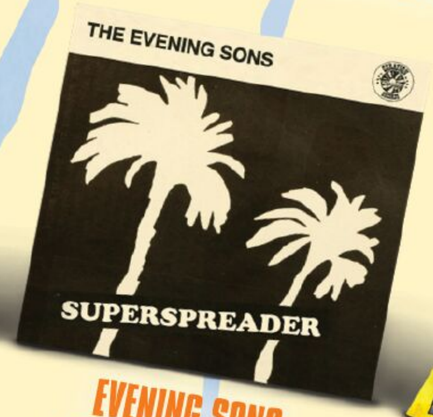
SINGLES ALL SUMMER

CLARKE & THE HIMSELFS
You and I



BLONE NOBLE
Pretty Picture

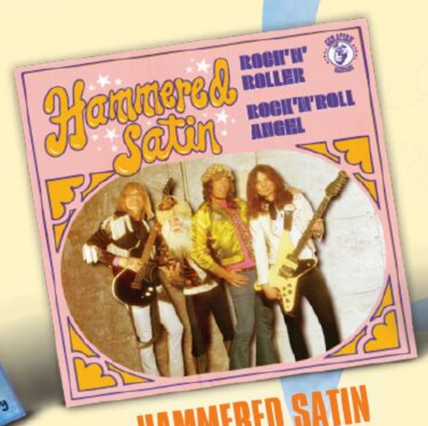
GOSPELBEACH
I'll Close My Eyes



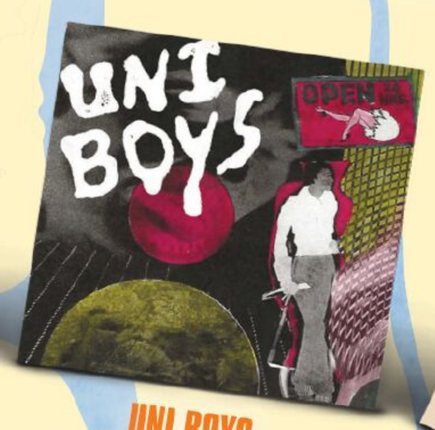
EVENING SONS
Superspreader

THOMAS WALSH
A Good Day For Me

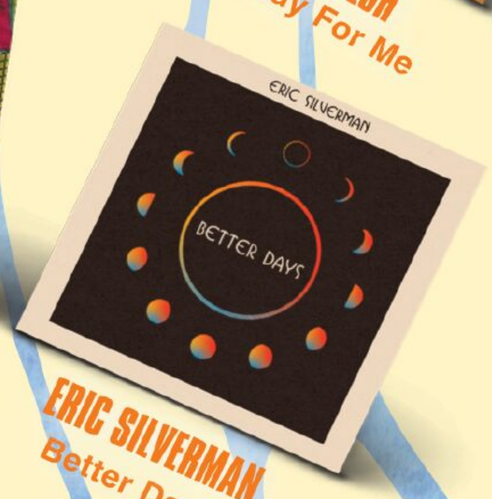
ALEX KOFORD
A Fabled Lullaby



HAMMERED SATIN
Rock'n'Roller



UNI BOYS
Let's Watch a Movie



ERIC SILVERMAN
Better Days

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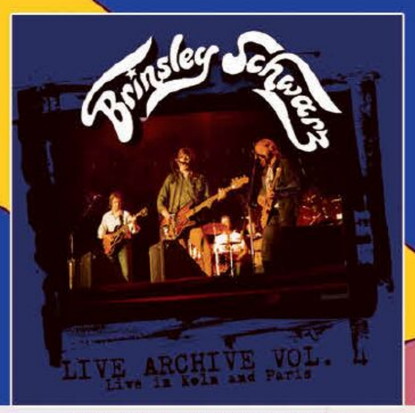

BRINSLEY SCHWARZ
LIVE ARCHIVE VOL. 4
VOGON

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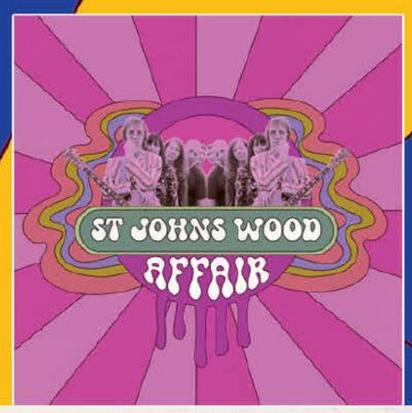

ST JOHN'S WOOD AFFAIR
ST JOHN'S WOOD AFFAIR
THINK LIKE A KEY

Indulge in the bewitching allure of 1960's Psychedelia with an expanded edition of this 2016 debut album. Includes demos , bonus cover tracks and a 12 page booklet. CD Only.

NIRVANA
ORANGE AND BLUE
THINK LIKE A KEY

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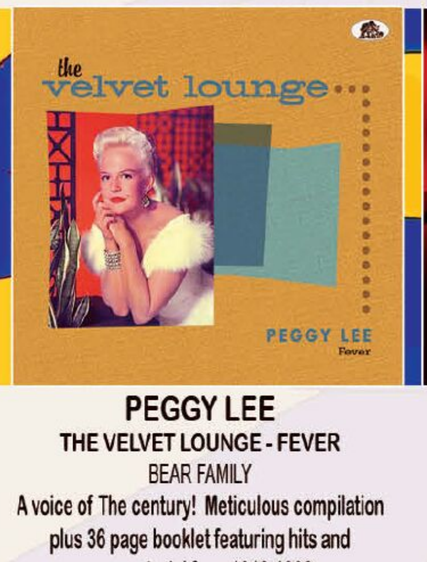
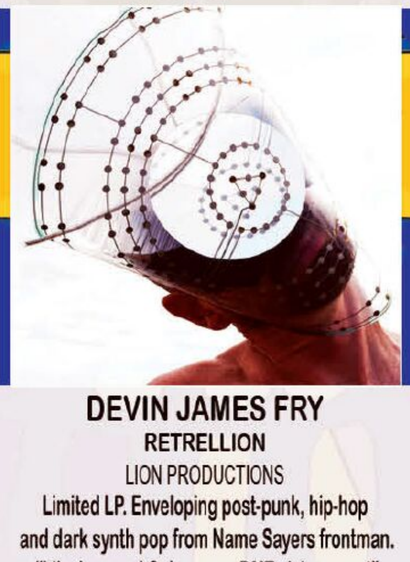


PEGGY LEE
THE VELVET LOUNGE - FEVER
BEAR FAMILY

A voice of The century! Meticulous compilation plus 36 page booklet featuring hits and rare material from 1948-1962.

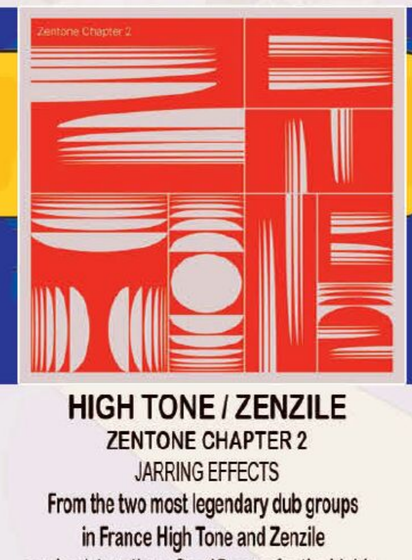
JACK RABBIT SLIM
HARD TO FORGET
WESTERN STAR

Much anticipated "comeback" album from the UK's most popular rockabilly band.



DEVIN JAMES FRY
RETRELLION
LION PRODUCTIONS

Limited LP. Enveloping post-punk, hip-hop and dark synth pop from Name Sayers frontman. "Like Leonard Cohen on a DMT vision quest" - Austin Chronicle.



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"I started playing guitar and not giving a fuck what people thought."
Eric Goulden in 1980

Gentleman Of Leisure

On his 20th album, **WRECKLESS ERIC** presents his most engaging set of songs yet, conjuring up imaginary out-of-season English seaside towns while recovering from a COVID-induced heart attack in upstate New York. **"It's playing really, but you're obliged to make it into this thing called work,"** he tells **BEN GRAHAM**. **"But as soon as it gets to be this thing called work, it doesn't work at all a lot of the time. It's a strange dichotomy."**
Portrait by **Bleddyn Butcher**

Who, out of the whole class of '77, is still at the top of their game and currently making what could reasonably be argued are the best records of their career? Only Wreckless Eric, that's who. Though known by most as a punk one-hit wonder for the deathless 'Whole Wide World', remembered as part of the classic Stiff Records roster of the late '70s, and lionised in garage-rock quarters as leader of The Len Bright Combo in the '80s, the erstwhile Eric Goulden's most recent run of albums, from 2016's *AmERICa* to *Construction Time & Demolition* (2018), *Transience* (2019) and new LP *Leisureland* represents a stunning late career renaissance. Mature, adventurous and musically exciting, they're still packed with all the caustic wit, bile, bittersweet pathos and trenchant observations of old. More so, in fact. Can the same claims be made of any of his peers?

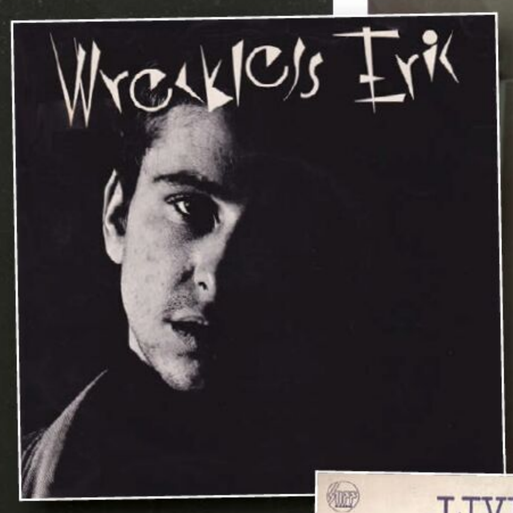
"Well, they started off good. I never thought I started off good," Eric laughs, with characteristic self-deprecating candour. "I know I got better because before that there were three albums with Amy, and I thought there was a progression there for both of us. At the time we would say, between the two of us we make up one good one."

Eric moved to the US with his wife, American singer-songwriter Amy Rigby, in 2011. The pair made three albums together between 2008 and 2012, partly so they could tour together and sustain their relationship, but the experience also expanded their joint musical horizons in terms of improving their writing, playing and recording techniques. They still play together, making use of the home studio in which Eric sits for our transatlantic Zoom call.

"I hated recording in studios," Eric admits. "I liked it when I first started, but there were always people in charge. And what I found out about people in charge is they're very good at making rules. 'You can't do it like that. We've got to do it like this.' I found that was stultifying really. I didn't know what I would do different, but I just felt denied access to the possibilities. So, I started to do it myself, and when it went well, it always had more spark than it did when I tried it at someone else's place."

Leisureland is Eric's first album since the pandemic, during which he nearly died after catching COVID early on and then suffering a serious heart attack. "Well, yeah, I didn't mean to!" he exclaims. "I got COVID, and it was not terrible. I didn't feel like I was going to die of it, I just couldn't get up. We were quarantining but then I thought I'm getting better and finally we could go out somewhere, and we went to see some friends who run a farm up out of town. And I couldn't walk down the street, I would just be out of breath and collapsing. And Amy said, 'Are you sure you're not having a heart attack?' And I said, 'No, that's completely different.' But she drove me to the emergency room, and she was absolutely right.

"I was all alone in intensive care, listening to someone die in the room next door, thinking, 'This is a bit weird,'" he continues. "It was the most exciting thing that'd happened to me for weeks! But I nearly died in the emergency room. It was a bit much, really. And when I was getting better, I found that the only time I really felt well was when I was recording. It gave me something to do when I couldn't do a lot for a while, I couldn't do anything strenuous. But I started to



Ericmania on stage in Auckland, NZ in 1980; '77 debut 'Whole Wide World'; *Live Stiffs* with Lowe, Costello, Wallis and Dury; the "liberating and stultifying " Len Bright Combo; '79 US tour polaroid; back on the road with partner Amy Rigby, 2006

record more, not worrying if it was aimless or unfocused, just keeping it open and seeing what happens. And that's really how I started recording the *Leisureland* album."

Unusually for Eric, *Leisureland* includes a number of instrumentals, and the music often recalls bands like Can, Faust or Neu! as much as the ramshackle pop-rock he's generally known for. "Sometimes you can go, 'It all sounded great until I started bloody singing on it," Eric laughs. "People will tell you you're a singer-songwriter. Well, I write songs, and I sing, but I don't ever think of myself as a singer-songwriter. It sounds like a Singer sewing machine! And it assumes that the focus has to be the vocal. But there are great records where you don't notice the vocal. It's very confining to me. I always wanted to make a soundscape album, but it's something I didn't dare to do, because I think people will be angry with me or something, or the wrath of God will come. But actually, the best times I've had when making records are when I think there's no-one on this planet who gives a flying fuck whether I do this or not."

There are songs on *Leisureland,* of course, several of which hark back, directly or indirectly, to Eric's childhood and teenage years growing up in Newhaven and Peacehaven on Britain's south coast. The album's centrepiece is 'Standing Water', describing a permanently off-season seaside town (partly based on Cromer in Norfolk) where, nevertheless, "John, Paul, George and Alan" are making music that sounds like no-one else in a mould-infested basement. The quartet resurface in 'They Come Free With Cornflakes' on Side Two, and whether they ultimately make it or not, their bloody-minded creativity in the face of boredom and adversity is something to be celebrated.

"They're a kind of symbol of hope, really, but it's also about the underdog and how you shouldn't underestimate anyone just because they might seem pretentious or whatever," Eric says. "I love John, Paul, George and Alan because they're easy to laugh at. Who do they think they are? But you just don't know, they might be really good. Every town has someone like that; they could be bigger than The Beatles if anyone knew about them. Or they might just be deluded. I had The Cleaners From Venus firmly in mind at the time."

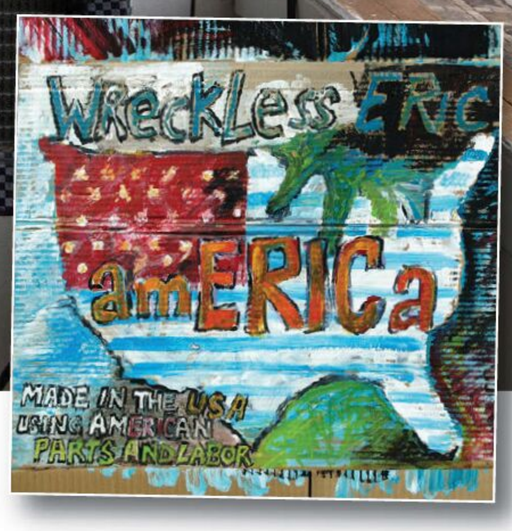
Eric's own musical journey began in small towns on the outskirts of Brighton in the late '60s, when from the age of 12 he started trying to play along to his favourite records by The Beatles, Kinks, Yardbirds, Small Faces *et al* on a cheap acoustic guitar. "It was terribly difficult, trying to figure it all out, because there was this world of Marshall amplifiers, and you couldn't imagine how people made a record."

The advent of heavier acts like The Jimi Hendrix Experience hardly helped this disconnect between what Eric was hearing and the sounds he could drag out of his old acoustic. "I thought you had to play single notes and make that noise like someone strangling a seagull," he recalls. The first time he saw someone play a chord on an electric guitar was a revelation. "This kid at school had a Höfner guitar and a little amplifier and he started playing chords on it. I didn't know you could do that! It was the most amazing sound."

Eric began playing in bands and ended up at art school in Hull, where he graduated from bassist to singer in college group Addis & The Flip Tops. A covers act to start with, he started writing original songs to fill out their set and on graduation was convinced by his girlfriend of the time to move to London and try to make it as a solo act. Reading in *Melody Maker* that the newly formed Stiff Records were looking for acts, Eric took a demo tape to their shopfront and handed it over to "this big hairy mountain man" who turned out to be Huey Lewis, then in country-rockers Clover.

One song on the tape in particular excited Stiff's house producer Nick Lowe and co-owner Jake Riviera. 'Whole Wide World' was included on the *Bunch Of Stiff Records* compilation in April '77 and was released as a single in August.

Eric the renaissance man, 2018; '93's *The Donovan Of Trash*; 2015's *AmERICa*



"The Stiff Records thing was really weird in a way. It's three and a half albums, seven singles and five years of my career, but **it's what everything ends up being focused on"**

Championed by John Peel and Annie Nightingale, the single topped the *Time Out* alternative charts but contrary to collective memory didn't trouble the official Top 40. It would however enjoy an extraordinary afterlife as a pop-punk standard, covered by dozens of artists over the next five decades, from The Monkees to Green Day.

"The Stiff Records thing was really weird in a way," Eric says now. "It's three and a half albums, seven singles and five years of my career, but it's what everything ends up being focused on. Jake Riviera left with Nick Lowe, and he said years later that he should have taken me with him, but I ended up on the wrong side of it, really. I needed more help and guidance than a record company could give me, personally and professionally."

A turbulent few years followed, including a false start with The Captains Of Industry, featuring ex-Blockheads Micky Gallagher and Norman Watt-Roy, and The Len Bright Combo, who recorded two fine albums in the mid-80s and played numerous legendary live shows. The Combo found Eric joined by Medway scene stalwarts Russ Wilkins (bass) and Bruce Brand (drums), both former members of The Pop Rivets and Thee Milkshakes alongside Billy Childish. It's a period about which Eric has mixed feelings. "It was liberating and stultifying at the same time," he says. "I started playing guitar and not giving a fuck what people thought, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent. It was just doing it, you know? But the thing is that people are incredibly good at creating rules. And it's almost like if you used this piece of equipment that was made after April '71 you could be castigated and cast out from decent society. So, it was this great liberation, but there was a downside as well. It took me years to get over that."

We end our conversation with Eric's memories of a period in the early '80s when he found himself working as tour driver and then as soundman for MOR country music legend (and Billy Graham associate) George Hamilton IV for three months of UK shows. "He was this middle-aged man, completely square, but he was wonderful," Eric recalls. "He had this TV show in England at the time that was completely middle of the road American country & western. And he was just great. He said to me, 'Do you know a band called Dr Feelgood?' And I had to take him to see them play. He loved them. He was a conflicted Christian, but he had a crazy side to him.

"I was sitting in a hotel bar with the drummer after a show and he came in and he said, 'Gentlemen, do you mind if I join you? I've got this bottle I want us to drink.' And he'd got this bottle of homemade elderflower wine from a fan. He started telling this story and we're getting completely unhinged as we're drinking it and we got to the end of it and we're all completely off our heads because it was incredibly strong. And the end of the story was that there are very little backstage facilities. And his last words were 'And I shall need this bottle tomorrow night to pee in.' And then he left us.

"The next night I'm going to knock on his dressing room door to tell him he's on and he comes to the door, and he hands me a warm bottle and it's the bottle from the night before. He says, can you dispose of this somewhere? He was very funny, you know?" S!

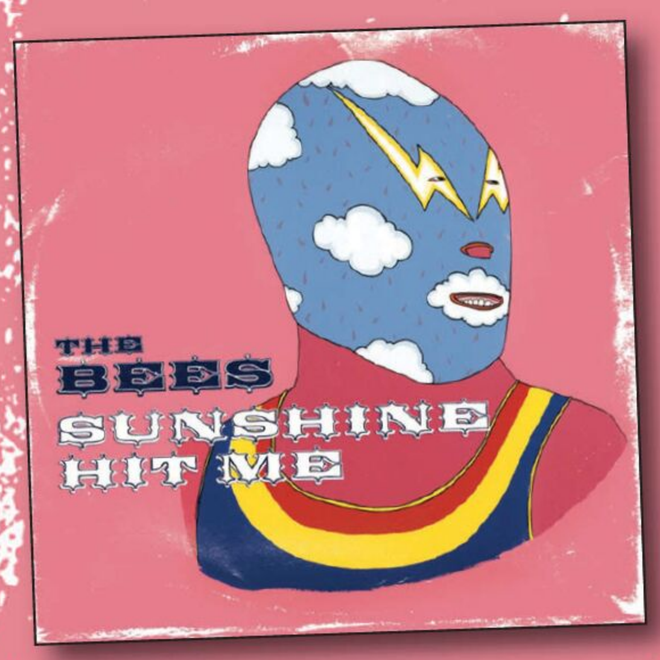
Thanks to Eric and Sean Newsham

Leisureland is out on 23rd August on Tapete

LET THE SUNSHINE IN

Whatever happened to **THE BEES**? Between 2001 and 2011, they released four acclaimed albums, a series of singles and EPs that enjoyed a high profile via radio, TV and film soundtracks, and supported the likes of Blur, Oasis, Paul Weller and Fleet Foxes. Then suddenly it all went quiet. As their Mercury-nominated debut, *Sunshine Hit Me*, is reissued in reinvigorated form for its 21st anniversary, **BEN GRAHAM** talks to founder member Aaron Fletcher about the band's organic origins, dramatic rise and sudden disappearance.

Portrait by TOM CRAIG



“It was a real pop-the-bubble kind of moment. Oh, we can make something of this.” The Bees in 2005. L-R: Paul Butler, Tim Parkin, Michael Clevett, Aaron Fletcher, Kris Birkin, Warren Hampshire

"The original Isle Of Wight Festival had a big impact," Aaron says of his and Bees co-founder Paul Butler's early musical inspirations, growing up on the island in the late '80s and early '90s. "I'm 13, 14, learning about The Doors and Miles Davis for the first time, and Jimi Hendrix, who was this big influence at the time, and knowing that they played just down the road. It blew our minds, learning about this festival that happened here in 1970. And what was happening now? Nothing."

Many of those who attended the three Isle Of Wight Festivals between 1968 and '70, especially the huge if troubled final event that attracted upwards of 600,000 people, held a utopian view of the festival scene that's hard to imagine now. Some saw the events as prototypes for a new way of living, and on the ferry crossing to the Island, an idealistic hardcore thought that maybe they could stay there permanently, leaving mainstream society behind with the mainland.

"We found out lots of our parents' friends came to the festival and stayed, and they were musicians," Aaron says. "And then we started buying their equipment. They didn't want it anymore and that's how we got into the old vintage sounds. We're picking up Fender Rhodes, Hammond organs, old '60s gear and we're getting it for next to nothing. Every week there was some old guy selling off really amazing things, which are now priceless. And they knew how to fix it, so we had all these old boys selling their gear and they were happy for us to use it and they would help us fix it and repair it."

Among the older musicians whose instruments the fledgling Bees inherited was Mark King of Level 42, arguably the island's most famous musical export, who sold the vintage-equipment-obsessed teenagers a Memorymoog synthesiser and a Rhodes electric piano. "The timing was magical for us," Aaron admits. "And also, the isolation on The Isle Of Wight. We'd go across [to the mainland] for gigs but we didn't think about gigging. We just wanted to get back and listen to records and then try and recreate them or figure out how they did it. We had a great bunch of mates who were all into music, a little bit stoner, a little bit hippy. We all loved the sea."

Aaron and Paul Butler had been friends since they were 13. "I think even when we first met, we said we should do a band," Aaron says now. Paul was a musical prodigy who could seemingly turn his hand to any instrument, from guitars to keyboards to drums to saxophone, and was also an amazing vocalist. Aaron for his part settled into the role of songwriter and lyricist, coming up with ideas which Paul would help bring to fruition with his playing skills. An ongoing partnership was born, as the pair combined their love of vintage gear with obsessive crate digging in search of great music in all genres.

"We had a couple of fantastic tiny little record stores on the island, second-hand stuff, so we were getting into lots of old music, loads of blind buying and following threads," Aaron says. "Oh, this guy's played on that record as well, you need to hear this because he's produced it, that kind of thing. We'd go through phases. We were listening to *Pet Sounds* when all our mates were listening to Nirvana. We had a massive soundtrack period, we'd be into Lalo Schifrin and John Barry when everyone was all like, why listen to that? Then we were getting into funk, James Brown and all that dirty funk stuff that was happening, and then we got into electronica. We bounced around all the time, just absorbing it all. That's why our sound is, you know, you'll get a ska tune and then you have an Afrobeat tune or a folk tune. We would always jump around. We weren't a band of a genre, and I think that reflects us completely, that's what we did. And I'm quite pleased about that."

The pair turned the garden shed at Paul's home in Sandown into a makeshift studio, filling it with vintage instruments and recording equipment, soundproofing it with egg boxes on the wall and using a curtained off corner for a vocal booth. "We were just making music for our mates," Aaron says. "That was what drove us. It was a really innocent time. We were obsessed with recording and learning techniques, but we didn't really gig. The gigging only came after the albums were made."

Paul released two albums of downtempo, instrumental jazz-funk as Pnu Riff on London label Holistic Recordings in the late '90s, very much influenced by the friends' aforementioned soundtrack explorations. These gained the support of DJ Giles Peterson, then at Kiss FM, and in '98 and '99, Paul and Aaron worked together as The Exploding Thumbs, releasing two albums (also on Holistic) that took their still groove-based music in a more freaky and experimental direction, mixing Frank Zappa and Syd Barrett with surrealist raps and minimalist electronica.

"The Bees came out of that because one day we were doing one of these world music, collage-type of tracks, and we actually wrote a proper song," Aaron says. "And we're like, this is not what we do, this is something new. And then we started writing tracks as songs basically, instead of instrumental grooves."

The first proper song the pair wrote was 'Punchbag'. A mutual friend persuaded them to send it to Wall Of Sound Records, who were then in the process of setting up an offshoot label called We Love You. On the basis of that one song, they were signed to a five-album deal; not bad for a basically non-existent band who only came up with the name The Bees on the ferry over to sign the contracts.

Still just a two-piece of Paul and Aaron, The Bees returned to their shed to work on tracks for the next two years, supporting themselves by working on Sandown's famous Bumpy Slide and other seafront amusements. The impressively authentic rocksteady reggae number 'No Trophy' was released as their debut 45 in January 2001, followed by the laid-back but deceptively trippy 'Punchbag' in June. In between, they were surprised and excited to be offered a John Peel session. Aaron remembers this as a pivotal moment, because although his and Paul's previous projects had enjoyed radio play and gained positive reviews, a Peel session meant recognition as a proper, credible band. There was only one problem: they'd still never played live, and The Bees was still just a studio project of Paul and Aaron. "We didn't think we were in those realms at all," Aaron says. "It was a real pop-the-bubble kind of moment. Oh, we can make something of this."

A band was quickly recruited from local friends and musicians, with Michael Clevett on drums, Tim Parkin and Warren Hampshire on keyboards, and Kris Birkin on guitar all going into intensive rehearsals. "We would latch on to these techniques that our favourite musicians had used and we'd try them out," Aaron says. "We were going to lock down like Captain Beefheart did with The Magic Band. We didn't quite lock ourselves in our house and live off mung beans or

"We're picking up Fender Rhodes, Hammond organs, old '60s gear and we're getting it for next to nothing. Every week there was some old guy selling off really amazing things, which are now priceless"

The Bees at Afton Down, the site of the original Isle Of Wight festival; albums two to four

Pier pressure. The Bees in 2005; 'Wash In The Rain' and Os Mutantes cover 'A Minha Menina' on 45

"We were listening to *Pet Sounds* when all our mates were listening to Nirvana. We had a massive soundtrack period, we'd be into Lalo Schifrin and John Barry when everyone was all like, why listen to that?"

whatever, but that was what we were going to do, in the shed."

While Paul was the lead vocalist and frontman, it was decided that non-musician Aaron would play bass on stage "because that's quite easy," he laughs. "But if you could watch those early gigs, I'm literally sweating over the fretboard, trying to remember the patterns. I got into it eventually, but it took me a long time.

"Our first gig was on the island, it was in a pub on the seafront called The Smugglers, and it was brilliant. A lot of fun. We emptied the shed, took everything down there, even the Hammond in the boot of someone's van. Nothing had happened on The Isle Of Wight for decades. There were local bands, but no one had touched on what we were doing, so we drew in a pretty impressive crowd for that. We did a couple of those, and we did a gig up in London. But I think the first thing we ever did live was the John Peel session. That was our first performance together, really."

More in the spirit of a Peel-type band than the smoother sounds they'd become known for, The Bees' next release was an

EP of scratchy lo-fi rock 'n' roll headed up by 'You Got To Leave'. Featuring Aaron on vocals sounding like a punk Syd Barrett over a clattering early Fall meets Rolling Stones guitar and organ jam, the title song is a thrilling outlier in The Bees' discography. Drunken fairground shanty 'Elain', the dubby 'Whistle Chop' and the spaced-out funk of 'Jackal Head' only added to the confusion of anyone trying to pigeonhole the band. All four tracks are now available as bonuses on the CD reissue of *Sunshine Hit Me,* alongside the previously unreleased out-take 'Seeds'.

"At the early gigs we would have the chilled out, dreamy stuff or such like, but then we had this whole hard freak-out section as well, which we drew on for those tracks," Aaron says. "But then we released *Sunshine Hit Me* and Paul was the lead vocalist, and that's the sound that cemented us with this sunshine, summery reputation, and that's where the love really grew from, I think."

Recorded to quarter-inch reel to reel tape in Paul's shed and then bounced down to DAT, with Paul playing almost every instrument, *Sunshine Hit Me* was finally released in March 2002. Drawing comparisons to Beck and The Beta Band, its infectious, funky grooves and psychedelic pop smarts earned it a place on that year's Mercury Music Prize shortlist, alongside David Bowie and The Coral, among others – all of whom lost out to Miss Dynamite's *A Little Deeper.*

The album included a version of the Jorge Ben-penned 'A Minha Menina', previously recorded by Os Mutantes in '68. The Bees had previously released the song on the *Punchbag* EP, and had recorded it for their Peel session, but it was still released as their next single and, although it only reached #80, the song was heard by millions when it was used on a Citroen car advert the following year (in 2008, it would also be utilised in a TV ad for

Magner's cider). "That was the last track we recorded for the album," Aaron recalls. "We needed one more song, and we decided we would just do a cover and literally we just got this compilation of Brazilian Tropicália and thought, 'Wow, that's a great guitar riff,' so we recorded it. That helped launch us as well. But obviously Jorge Ben, who wrote it, made loads of money out of it from it being used in adverts. We didn't get a penny for it because it's his song. But you know, exposure."

Over the next few years, Bees songs would turn up regularly on adverts, TV shows and film soundtracks, gaining the band plenty of new listeners and, at least for the songs they wrote, a steady flow of cheques to keep them afloat. But while all this was welcome, it meant that people were hearing their songs in contexts they wouldn't necessarily choose to be associated with. "No, you're absolutely right, our music got used a lot on films and adverts," Aaron admits. "And that was as cool as the Mercury nomination and doing John Peel. It was silly money in those days as well. But we did turn things down. We turned down a sausage advert because half the band were vegetarians. But we should have done it because it was incredible money!"

'A Minha Menina' also helped to revive interest in Os Mutantes and Tropicália generally in the UK, its success contributing to the Brazilian artists' original albums being reissued and reassessed. In 2006, The Bees were invited to play at the 'Tropicália Remixed' event at The Barbican where, alongside Sean O'Hagan, Gruff Rhys, the children and cousins of the original musicians, and a 10-piece orchestra, they recreated the classic album *Tropicália Ou Panis Et Circencis* live. "Yeah, we're absolutely blessed. We felt really honoured to have done it," Aaron says. "On every album we've done, we've tried to have some sort of Brazilian influenced song. We love the music and the energy."

Another great influence on The Bees is Jamaican music, and roots reggae in particular. Their love of artist-producers like Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Niney The Observer and Augustus Pablo led to them creating instrumental dub versions of all the tracks from *Sunshine Hit Me*. Some of these are finally seeing the light of day on a companion mini album later this year, called *Sunshine Dub Me*. "We tried not to be cliched, just to be authentic in the studio," Aaron says. "And Massive Attack did that with *Protection,* The Mad Professor did a remix of their second album as *No Protection*. So, we thought that would be a nice surprise for all the people who've been waiting for us for 20 years."

That wait, with *Sunshine Hit Me* largely unavailable for the last two decades (original vinyl sells for £200), was caused mostly by the same legal and contractual wrangles that led to The Bees leaving Wall Of Sound after their debut and signing with Virgin for the rockier *Free The Bees,* recorded over three weeks at Abbey Road's legendary Studio Two. "It was incredible," Aaron says. "I mean, we're never gonna pay off what it cost to go in there, but that's okay. We pulled out the old mixing desk that The Beatles used, with the aeroplane faders. We were using John's popper stopper and all this stuff and using the Celeste that they used. It was wild, we couldn't believe it."

Made by the full band for the first time, *Free The Bees* cracked the Top 30 and spawned their biggest single, novelty dance number 'Chicken Payback', originally written as a throwaway joke. But it also included the gorgeous soul ballad 'I Love You', which Aaron is particularly proud of, and psych-tinged singles 'Wash In The Rain' and 'Horsemen'.

The next few years raced by with sell-out tours, two more hit albums and meeting and collaborating with many of their musical heroes. Putting their money into building a proper home studio in Ventnor, where the band lived in a shared house "like *The Monkees*" (and where they recorded their third album, 2007's *Octopus*), they avoided most of the temptations of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle. But success still took its toll. "We were wrapped up for about a decade and it was amazing," Aaron says. "But we stayed on the island. We'd always go back to the island after a gig if we could. We never stayed for the after-party. We'd say, no, we've got a ferry to catch. You have the rider. But you know, you kind of lose it, definitely. Most bands say this. You sort of lose the creativity of writing, because you have to meet deadlines and things like that."

Eventually, after promotion for 2010's *Every Step's A Yes,* which included dates with Paul Weller and a UK tour with Fleet Foxes in 2011, The Bees needed a break. Paul had been working with US artists like Devendra Banhart and decided to move to LA, where he still resides. Although The Bees never officially broke up, as the years went by, the prospect of regrouping became increasingly distant. Aaron and Bees' keyboard player Tim Parkin made an excellent album as 77:78 for Heavenly Records in 2018, but otherwise all was silent in The Bees camp. Until now.

"Yeah, it kind of came to quite a quick stop, but I think it needed to. We were just too involved with each other," Aaron says. "We all lived in each other's pockets for 10-12 years and it got a bit too much. And then you're trying to start a family and it's hard to go on the road and promote a record when you're in your mid-30s.

"You know, we never worked in our 20s. We were blessed that we could be in a band. The royalties were good and publishing deals came in to support us to do that. And then when the band unofficially stopped, I had to get a real job. Which I quite like, I've been through a few jobs, I've had an interesting journey. Paul's still fully in music. He's recording all over the place. He's been in Nashville recently and he's doing spatial audio mixes, he's fully immersed in that world, still. I've completely stepped out of it. I sort of decided, yeah, I've had my bite of the cherry. But then we rekindled our friendship. Not that we fell out, but we just sort of lost touch. We'd been together since we were 13, so about 20 years. We have had quite a break, but now we're strong, it's good. I was speaking to Paul yesterday and he was like, we should do Bees number five. Because four is a bit of a weird number. And I was like, yeah.

"People want us to gig, which is lovely," Aaron adds. "I don't know how or if we could or would. But at the moment it's gone back to just being about the records. We just want to get the music out there." S!

Sunshine Hit Me is reissued on 22nd September, with Sunshine Dub Me to follow in November. The single 'Seeds' is out now

Paul Butler and Aaron Fletcher still buzzin' in 2023

"We were going from performing to 800 people, to a thousand, to now 8,000!" The Four King Cousins in 1968. L-R: Tina, Carolyn, Cathy, Candy

California NIGHTS

With their glamorous "mod image" and breathy four-part harmonies, family singing group **THE FOUR KING COUSINS** personified the look and sound of lush '60s soft-pop. Fresh from writing her memoir, cousin, singer and actress Tina Cole reminisces about her life and career in swinging Hollywood. **CHAIM O'BRIEN-BLUMENTHAL** tunes in

"The Four King Cousins lived in a parallel universe to everything going on at the time," Tina Cole tells *Shindig!* when asked if the rock and pop of the '60s that surrounded Los Angeles had any effect on her. "I mean, I lived in Laurel Canyon at the same time as The Beach Boys and Mamas & Papas, but we lived in a bubble. It was just a totally different world." While The Four King Cousins didn't fit with the rock 'n' roll crowd, they left their mark with an audience of fans who enjoyed their four-part harmonies and tight arrangements, with their 1968 album *Introducing…* becoming a bedrock in the soft-pop revival, lauded by their peers and fans who dig their soft harmonies. "When I hear some of these people like Brian Wilson and Toni Tennille talk about how we influenced them, it blows me away. We had no idea at the time that they were listening."

The King family's origins in music date back to the 1800s when Lars Mortensen immigrated to the US from Denmark, bringing along his fiddle. As Mortensen and his fellow Mormon immigrants became targets for their religious beliefs, they fled to Utah, where Lars would serenade his fellow travellers whilst traveling cross-country. Music soon became a bond in the family, with Tina's grandfather training his breed in singing, dancing and performing, touring the country with them on the then-lucrative Vaudeville circuit, as the Driggs family of entertainers. It was a hard living, as Tina recalls hearing stories of them camping across the land and making money only when they passed the hat around. "They would just move around when September came along, whatever town they were in, they would rent a house," she remembers. Eventually patriarch William King Driggs noticed his daughters would often sing in harmony, "while doing the dishes", and got them work at a Salt Lake City radio station. Before long, the family moved to San Francisco, where the now-christened Four King Sisters got work on local station KGO, replacing their idols The Boswell Sisters. This in turn got them ample notice, so much so that bandleader Horace Heidt hired them to accompany his band on tour; this would lead to future work with big band leaders Charlie Barnet and Artie Shaw, and a recording deal with Bluebird Records. "The King Sisters were the first female group to sing in four-part harmony," Tina says proudly. They also started getting exposure for Soundies, a new technology where recording stars would film shorts performing what is now recognised as proto-music videos. Eventually, sister Luise married bandleader Alvino Rey, and this combination booster the family's profile even more, with the popular Rey becoming their musical director and guiding force.

Growing up the daughter of 'King Sister' Yvonne and film

composer father Buddy Cole meant that music was going to be a part of everyday life in Tina's household. "Our family was just naturally musical," she says. "We would sing each and every day, at home, in church. [The cousins] would be playing as kids while our mothers were rehearsing at home." With a focus on family, naturally holidays were an important part of their lives, and Tina can still recall the kids putting on holiday shows for their family at home, the siblings singing, dancing and being stars of their own show, even if it wasn't for an audience beyond relatives. That would soon change. "In '63, Yvonne was asked by the bishop of our church if the King sisters would perform at a fundraiser. She missed seeing the family together, having moved out to the Bay Area, and suggested to the church that, instead of just the sisters, we would include their families?" Tina remembers. "Mom called us and asked if we would be up for it. Absolutely! We were always up for being together and having fun."

With the benefit a success, the King family was asked to perform additional benefit shows, with the highest profile one being an event to raise funds for Brigham Young University in Salt Lake City. "We were going from performing to 800 people, to a thousand, to now 8,000!" And it was at that performance that the family was approached by an entertainment industry executive, who suggested that they call the head of programming at ABC. "I remember going into the kitchen one morning and watching my mother making breakfast in her night gown, with one hand on the phone, talking to television executives about putting together a show," Tina laughs. With that, the King family shot a pilot. "There was no ambience. We shot it in a gym, and it was two hours long. But the people at ABC liked it. They suggested cutting it down to an hour. But they said the heart was there. And Nick Vanoff [producer] came to see us when we appeared on The Hollywood Palace. He had tears in his eyes, saying this was a program he would want his family to see."

On 23rd January '65, *The King Family Show* premiered on the ABC TV network. While the variety show mixed styles of music, it was the King cousins who attracted much of the notice, with a weekly Top 20 segment featuring the teens performing covers of the rock, soul and pop hits on the record charts becoming a fan favourite. It also helped that some members had professional experience, Tina in particular possessing acting and musical chops. "When I was 14, I was discovered by Warner Bros films, and they had me do a screen test with Gary Cooper. I didn't even know who he was! They asked me to study at their drama school, which I did for four summers. That led to them casting me on the TV show *Hawaiian Eye*, to replace Connie Stevens, who had been put on suspension for six months. I was acting with Troy Donohue, who was the heartthrob of all the teenage girls. We shot in Hawaii, and it was my first professional work, just a pure joy. Paradise!"

With her role on the show getting lots of attention, offers for work started coming in. "Rowan and Martin [comedy duo] were looking for an opener for their Australian tour, and since Dick had dated my aunt, he'd seen me perform around the family, and asked my mother if I would open for them in Sydney for two weeks. I'd never performed solo before, so I was very nervous." How nervous was she? "When I got to the airport, my mother asked me if I had money for tips and hotel staff. I looked in my purse, and I only had $6 to take with me across the world! Thankfully, my mother handed me a 20. I went to Australia for my first shows with just $26."

By the mid-60s, the King family had become a nationwide success, with a weekly television variety show, and five albums on Warner Bros. "Jim Conklin [Warners head] was married to our aunt Donna, and loved our harmonies," Tina recalls. "Even as kids, he would ask us to do favours for him. Which is how we wound up singing background on [Frank Sinatra's] 'High Hopes'. We also sang back-up in the studio for The Everly Brothers and The Lettermen when we were 15." Warner Bros had begun its record division back in '58, focusing on soundtracks and easy-listening. It wasn't until the middle of the next decade that the label would make a concerted push towards rock 'n' roll. "Jim had been given a song," Cole states. "Rock 'n' roll was still new to the label, and the producers of [TV show] *Bourbon Street Beat* wanted a rock song in the show. It was really bad! (Laughs) And uncle Jim knew that his arrangers were older, but he knew he had a bunch of teenagers at home who might be able to do something with it. So, he gave it to his daughter [and King Cousin] Candy, who worked up the dance to go along with it. Our cousin Lex [De Azevedo] arranged it. We worked up the song, put together a dance, and brought it to Warners vice-president Bill Orr, and they liked it enough to use it." It was through this relationship that, billed as The King Cousins, the teens went into the studio for their first session. The result was a single of the poppy 'Today I'm In Love', penned by Van McCoy, and the ballad 'Just One Smile', sung by cousin Ric Azevedo, and penned by a young Randy Newman.

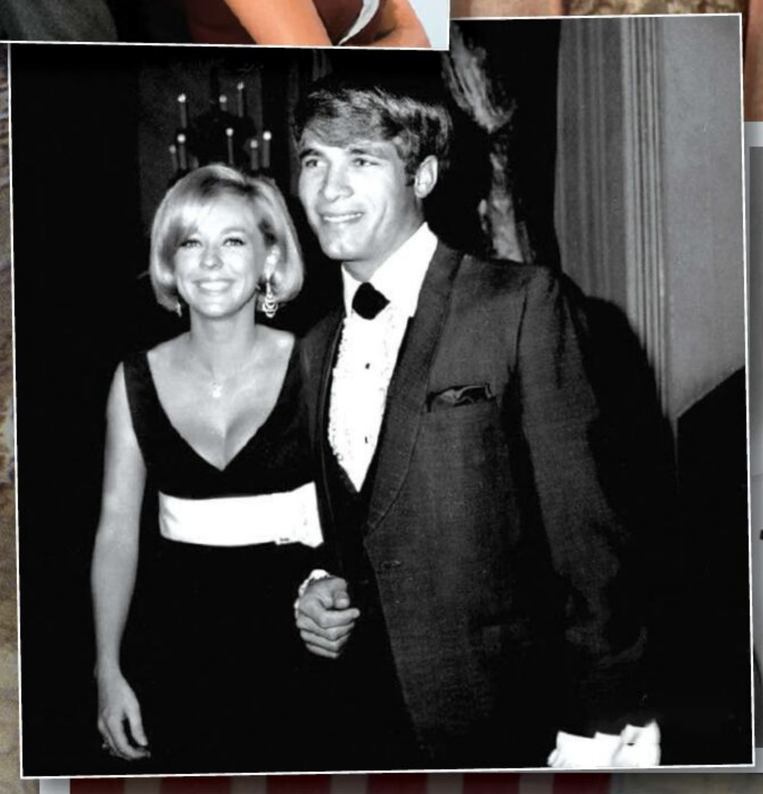
Despite the strong pedigree on their debut, the single stiffed, and by early '66, the television show met a similar fate. But one of the positive things to come out of it was the popularity of The Five King Cousins: Candy, Cathy, Carolyn, Jamie and Tina. After the series ended, the girls quickly signed on as featured players on variety television show *The Kraft Music Hour*, on which they showed their versatility, performing a mixture of pop and rock covers and updated standards. "John Davidson hosted," Tina recalls. "That program was Richard Pryor's first network show, and the same for George Carlin. There was a folk group, Jackie and Gayle [from The New Christy Minstrels], and us. It was a really amazing time, and we just blended into it." When Jamie decided to leave the act for college, they became The Four King Cousins, and it was with this line-up that their next big opportunity presented itself.

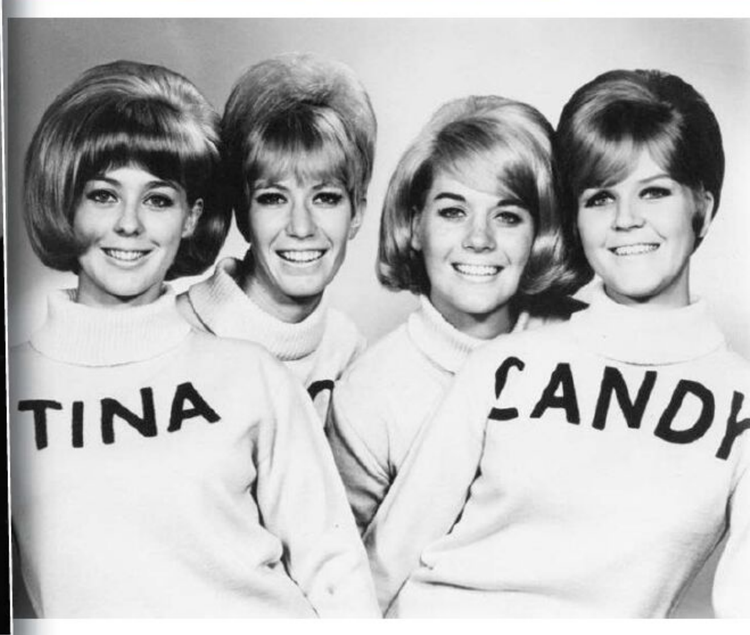
Lex De Azevedo, besides being a member of the King clan, was a talented and respected arranger and producer for Capitol Records, and he had the brilliant idea to update the Cousins occasionally passé sound for the swinging '60s. "Lex didn't want us singing our natural way," Tina recalls. "He wanted four Claudine Longets: that breathy sound." More than that, De Azevedo had a distinct vision for the album. "He was looking for a specific California/Beach Boys sound, but with girls. He had this idea, this concept.". On '68's *Introducing The Four King Cousins*, Lex's vision comes shining through, as the album weaves a mixture of lush arrangements with the cousins' delicate four-part harmonies to create a record that would make even Brian Wilson proud. Perhaps the perfect example can be heard on their rendition of Lesley Gore's 'California Nights'. Lex's vivid arrangement blends perfectly with the cousins' sun-kissed vocals, with the result being a soft pop *tour-de-force* that defines the California sound. Speaking of the coast, Tina remembers working with the brilliant Wrecking Crew. "Those guys were great, they were the best. Lex worked with all of them. I remember Hal Blaine playing drums on those sessions, and Glen Campbell on guitar. Even then, he was just super talented."

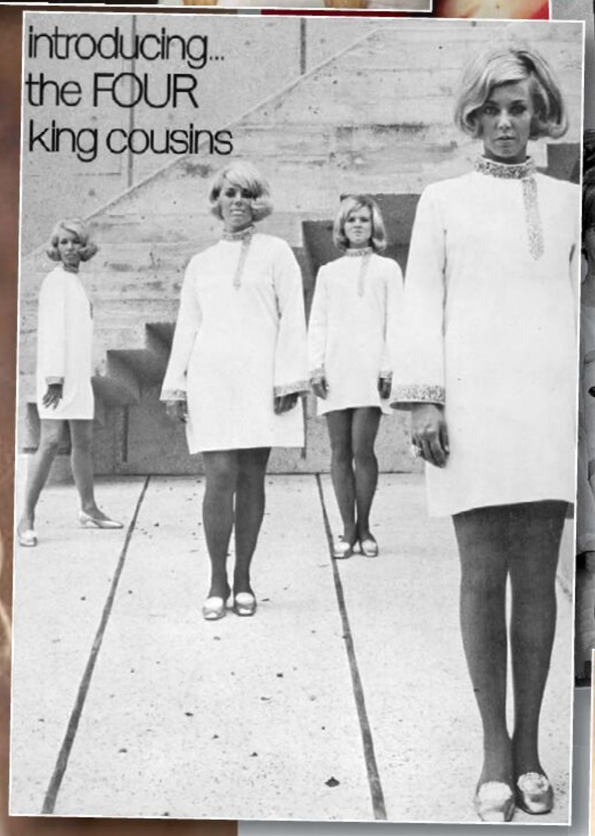
Listening to the record, one of the key takeaways is the superb song selection,

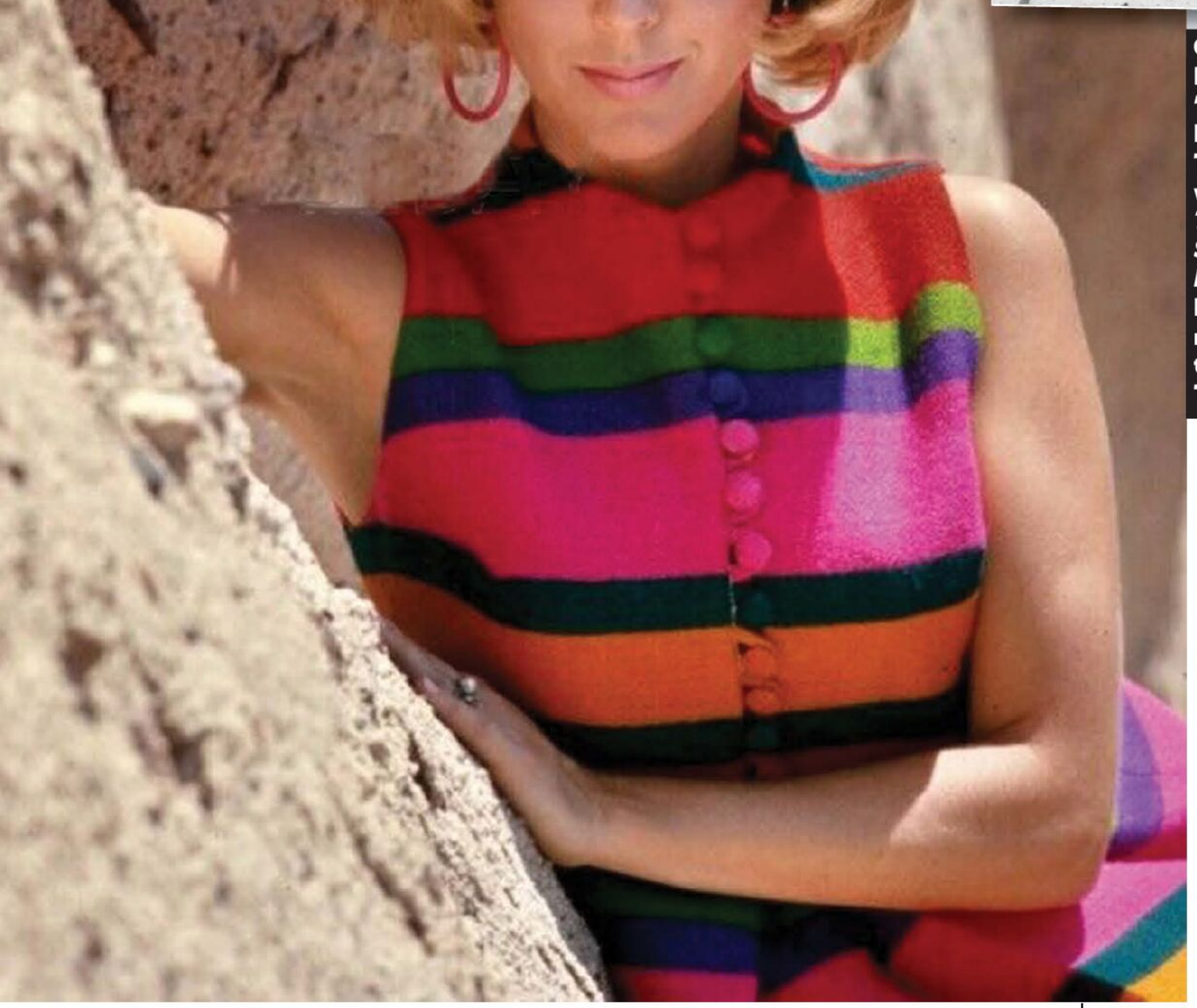
"ROCK 'N' ROLL WAS STILL NEW TO WARNERS, AND THE PRODUCERS OF TV SHOW BOURBON STREET BEAT WANTED A ROCK SONG IN THE SHOW. IT WAS REALLY BAD!"

Adventures in Hollywood. Clockwise from left: Tina in *Hawaiian Eye*, 1963; *The King Family* TV show; the cousins with Lucille Ball on *The Lucy Show*; the girls perform; Cathy and Tina on *The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*, '64; Tina in *My Three Sons* (below); Tina with co-star Don Grady









Clockwise from top left: the girls see in the '70s; with Ella Fitzgerald; late '60s Tina Cole promo photo; with Ray Charles on *The Jonathan Winters Show*; 1968 album *Introducing...*; Capitol Records promo materials; still together in the '70s; Tina shines alone

bringing together tunes penned by soft-pop legends Roger Nichols, Burt Bacharach and Wilson himself. "That was all Lex," Tina confesses. "We had no involvement whatsoever." One of the biggest highlights of the album is the cousins' take on Paul Williams and Roger Nichols' 'I Fell', giving the song a breathy, glamorous feel, wrapped up in De Azevedo's hip arrangement, and helping cement the record's status as a soft-pop/AOR classic, just as much as the cover's image of the mod-dressed blonde quartet did. Despite the attention and exposure from frequent television appearances and club shows, the record failed to find much of an audience, possibly due to a lack of publicity from Capitol. As it turned out, the cousins themselves weren't happy about the finished product either. "My sister Cathy hated the record," Tina recalls. "She thought we sounded too wispy, with that breathy sound. But that's what [Lex] wanted. Even I didn't really appreciate [the album] at the time. It took a while, but now I absolutely love it."

By the time of its release, Tina didn't have time to be concerned with promotion anyway, as she had made a strident push in her acting career, though not intentionally. "I never had an agent," she admits. "It sounds odd today, but it's absolutely true. I originally had a seven-year contract with [Warner Bros films] but it was in the waning days of the contract player, they were grooming young people to be future stars," she recalls. "Once Jack Webb came in and took over, he ended the contract players system, and it became a bottom-line business. The whole landscape changed, and they wanted to take fewer chances. This was also still early enough in television, that you didn't cross sides. Movie stars didn't dare appear on TV, and television stars didn't make it in them movies. After my contract ended, I did a few guest spots on *The Lucy Show*, and one guest spot on *My Three Sons*."

The long-running family comedy starred Fred MacMurray as a single father raising his three sons, with help from his cantankerous uncle. Tina's guest spot proved popular enough to be called back annually to make guest appearances. "I was busy enough working with my family," Tina declares. "We would work six days a week doing [*The King Family Show*]. I didn't really put much thought into acting." Eventually, after seeing the popularity of Cole's appearances on *Sons*, the producers came calling. "I got a call from Ed Hartman [producer], he said they were holding auditions for actresses to play lead character Robbie's girlfriend on the show. I told him I was busy working with my family, and he said I should come down anyway. I finally agreed and went in for an interview. Now, usually these types of interviews would last a few minutes, maybe. They chatted with me for 45 minutes, telling me about the nuances of this character. It was the first female character on this show, which had an all-male cast – a big change. They had auditioned 2000 girls from all over the country but didn't like any of them." Ultimately, it would take the charm of MacMurray's wife to help seal the deal, and even then it almost didn't happen. "I had agreed to take the part finally and was out the door when the casting director stopped me at the elevator and said that I forgotten to sign the contract!" Tina recalls, laughing.

Already a hugely popular show, with the addition of Tina Cole to the cast, *My Three Sons* was as hot as ever. But even from the beginning there was tension on the set. "Don Grady didn't think I was right to play his wife. He wanted a Peggy Lipton-type, a long surfer girl, and here I am this bouncy round girl! Totally opposite. But he didn't tell me that at the time, not until two years later." Things were tough on the set between the two at first as well. "When we started the show, we were cool towards each other, but professional all the time. I remember the first time we had to do a make-out scene, we were having trouble, it wasn't working. The director told us to go backstage and practice, to make it look convincing for the cameras. It's funny, in hindsight!" Especially considering that several years into the show, their dynamic had changed considerably. "We started working well together, and it led to a romantic relationship. We fell in love for real."

"LEX DE AZEVEDO WANTED FOUR CLAUDINE LONGETS. THAT BREATHY SOUND. HE WAS LOOKING FOR A CALIFORNIA/ BEACH BOYS SOUND, BUT WITH GIRLS"

By the dawn of the new decade, Grady decided to quit the show to focus on his musical career. "He felt he'd done the acting thing as far as he could". Even during the show's run, Don worked his music into the program, performing his Canterbury Records singles on the program, and gained national success when he joined The Yellow Balloon, whose album was produced by pop wunderkind Gary Zekely. "Even though Don had left the show, I stayed on in my role. They wrote him off as working overseas, and we even filmed a pilot for a spinoff about the two of us, raising our kids [on the show]. But he was done with all that." Retreating into his music, he took a page from the Emmitt Rhodes playbook and wrote, performed and recorded a group of introspective tunes, which Elektra Records released as *Homegrown* in '73. "I didn't realise how good Don's music was until we started dating," Tina recalls. "He had one of the first portable recording studios, it was all in suitcases so he could travel anywhere with it." And in choosing the title of his album, Grady meant what he said. "On that record, over half the songs are about our relationship."

Speaking of relationships, things were rocky at this stage between the two. "I remember one time he came over and was very angry because I hadn't officially gotten divorced," Tina remembers. "I'd been separated for a few years, but we hadn't filed the paperwork. He came in, sat down, and played 'One Man Woman' [from *Homegrown*] for me, and left in a huff," Tina recalls, still stunned all these years later. "I signed the papers right after that." Ultimately, despite repeated attempts, Don and Tina would never marry, and by the end of the decade, went their separate ways, remaining close friends. "He was the love of my life," she declares.

With the end of *My Three Sons*, Tina decided to step away from acting and focus on other things. "The TV landscape had changed, and I really enjoyed singing with my family more, so it was an easy choice." And it wasn't like she hadn't kept busy "At one point in the '60s, between *My Three Sons*, the cousins, and talk shows and game shows, I was on television every day of the week." Needing a break, she continued her musical career, traveling the world with The Four King Cousins as well as recording a second album for Playboy Records in Japan in '77.

Some 55 years since its release, *Introducing The Four King Cousins* has become a cult favourite among soft-pop fans worldwide. "We never had any idea that we would continue to have such a strong fanbase. It's absolutely a wonderful feeling, and a blessing." And now with her memoir written and published, Tina is enjoying sharing her memories of the past with readers everywhere. "In writing this book, I dug down in my memory banks to tell some great stories, like the time we hung out with The Beatles." Wait, what? "You'll have to read my book for that one," she says with an impish wink.

My Three Lives: A Memoir by Tina Cole is published by Bear Manor Media

"There were lots of crazies, but the good crazies, the kind that make life interesting." Melanie Safka surveys her adoring audience, 1970

All The Right Noises

MELANIE stepped from the Greenwich Village folk scene of her native New York to overnight fame at Woodstock. Yet a piece of her heart was forever in England, where her gutsy, observational ruminations on life and love found favour with John Peel, BBC TV viewers and the audience at 1971's Glastonbury Fayre. **DAVE THOMPSON** talks to the storied singer about her adventures on this side of the pond.

"Melanie Safka is going to be a star" – Karl Dallas, *Melody Maker*, 1969

One of the key scenes in *Glastonbury Fayre*, Peter Neal's 1972 movie of the previous year's inaugural Glastonbury Festival, captures a windswept Melanie clambering up onto the late-night stage and looking out over an audience that sits silently, almost reverently, mesmerised by the tiny woman with her massive guitar and a voice that's even bigger. Everything looks so organic. She's seated on a simple director's chair; there's a dandy off to one side playing with soap bubbles; someone else is moving through the crowd distributing flowers; and her single song in the film, 'Peace Will Come', rings out without a word of interruption from the crowd. It makes believers out of everyone.

"There was a real buzz about Melanie being there," Hawkwind's Nik Turner recalled in 2015. "Surprise, too, because there really weren't many Americans on the bill; it was a very English event. But everyone adored her, and the whole site fell silent while she was on. Even the drummers stopped playing to listen."

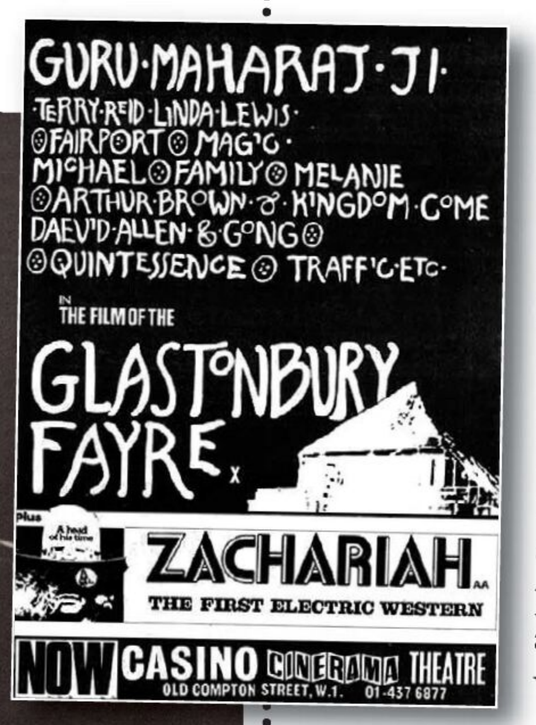
Melanie, too, remembers Glastonbury as a once-in-a-lifetime experience. "I flew in… I was so jet lagged and so out of my mind that [festival organiser] Michael Eavis took me to his farmhouse and let me take a nap there, because I was so tired. But it was absolutely magical.

"There were lots of crazies, but the good crazies, the kind that make life interesting. I remember these bikers, I guess you'd call them, they had a homemade beer that they insisted I have. I was onstage… I jumped up on stage, and this is one of those things – is that even possible? Could I really have done that? Yes, I hoisted myself up onstage from the front, and that's when I was drinking the beer that these guys made…

"That was one thing that stood out. The other was that everybody was really *there*. I've done so many festivals, especially the ones more recently, where everybody is kept so separate – at The Isle Of Wight in 2010, there was a chain link fence around where Paul McCartney was, and it didn't matter what I said. 'I want to say hello.' 'Yeah, you and 400,000 other people.' But at Glastonbury, everybody was there, everybody was together. Just lovely people, lovely memories."

In 1971, Melanie was at the peak of her powers, culturally if not musically or commercially. Two years had elapsed since Woodstock confirmed her status as, even she puts it, America's premier "cute little hippy chick", and that despite her not making it into either movie or the original soundtrack album. Her presence, her message and, the following year, the song she wrote about the event, were enough to cement her place in the legend.

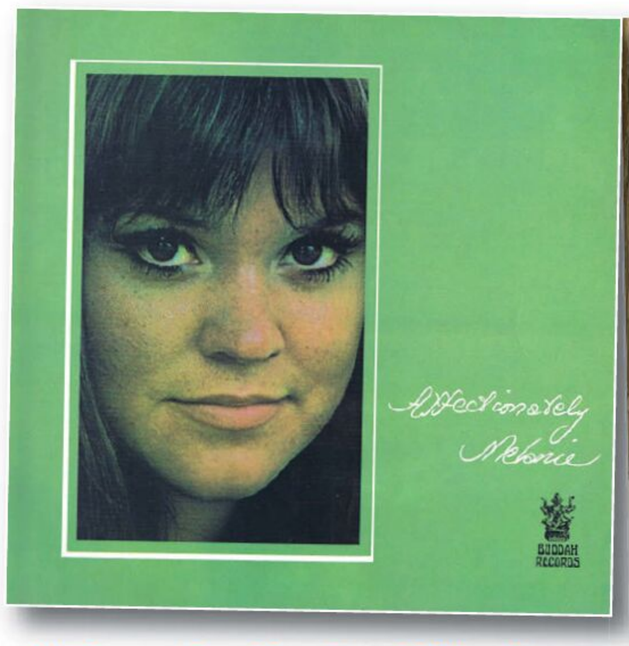
'Lay Down (Candles In The Rain)' was written around her view from the stage, the thousands of candles that were lit as the skies darkened and the clouds opened, the sea of tiny lights flickering before her. Later, that moment would be cited as the birth of a still-prevalent concert tradition, audiences raising cigarette lighters (or, latterly, cell phones) into the air to show their appreciation for a live performance. But it started at Woodstock… it started with Melanie.



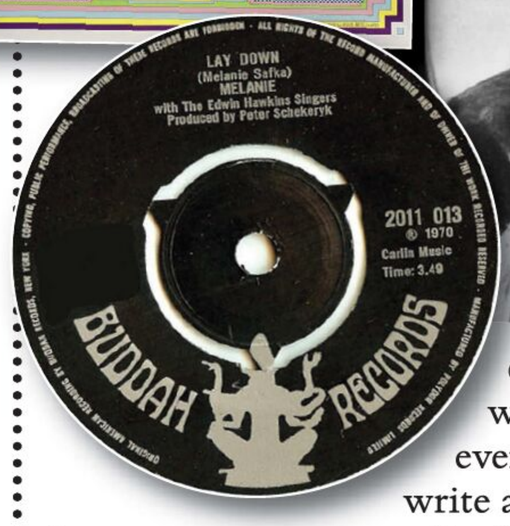
"The tiny woman with the massive guitar"; *Glastonbury Fayre* movie ad

Melanie Anne Safka was born in Queens, New York on 3rd February 1947, Italian on her mother's side, Ukrainian on her father's. She was always a musical child, but she hated rock 'n' roll and even as a teen in the early '60s, living now in Long Branch, New Jersey, her sense of purpose and disregard for middle American convention saw her labelled a beatnik by her classmates. Lotte Lenya was an early influence – Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs, too. Interviewed for my book *An Evolving Tradition: The Child Ballads On Record* a couple of years ago, she even credited her love of folk music for introducing her to the man who became her husband.

"I had just graduated from The American Academy Of Dramatic Arts, and I was very hesitant in going to auditions, but I came across the casting call for an esoteric play called *Dark Of The Moon*, and a girl to play the role of Barbara Allen, named for the Child Ballad (traditional ballads from England and Scotland, and their American variants, anthologised by Francis James Child in the 19th century). I took it as an omen, as I



Melanie during her Woodstock performance; 1969's sophomore album, released in the UK as *Affectionately Melanie*; March '71 Melody maker cover; Isle Of Wight Festival poster; key (ahem) UK 45s



"There's that attitude some people adopt, the cynical cool persona where something's only good if you've discovered it, and as soon as others find it, it's not cool any longer. I became the not-cool person"

think I was the only person in my acting school who could play the guitar and sing; and not only that, but I knew all 28 verses of the ballad.

"I came in from New Jersey for the audition and when I got to the address, The Brill Building on Broadway, I didn't have a room number. I didn't know where to go, so I wandered into the wrong office… which led to my meeting Peter Schekeryk, my future husband and record producer."

By the time Melanie debuted on the Greenwich Village folk scene around '65, her repertoire was largely self-composed, already pointing her towards the material included on early singles 'Beautiful People' and 'Garden In The City' (recorded during a short-lived spell with Columbia Records) and '68's Buddah Records debut album *Born To Be*.

With Schekeryk by her side, producing and arranging the songs she was now furiously writing, Melanie effortlessly carved herself a niche in the then nascent singer-songwriter movement. But while so many contemporaries murmured sensitively of their trials and tribulations, Melanie sang like a steamroller. Or, as one witness to her first ever show at London's Roundhouse in '69 put it, "Melanie doesn't just offer her songs, but herself. Her songs are her – her thoughts, her observations, her hopes, her fears. There's none of the coyness of a Julie Felix, the sweetness of a Joan Baez. It's the gutsy feel of a Janis Joplin, mixed with the bittersweet of an Edith Piaf."

It was an impressive blend, especially when coupled with Melanie's period-perfect politics, and Buddah Records marketed her like McDonald's peddle burgers. Literally, they threw her in every direction, just to see where she stuck. The love of the underground press wasn't enough; they wanted everybody to write about her, and they went to some peculiar lengths to ensure that happened.

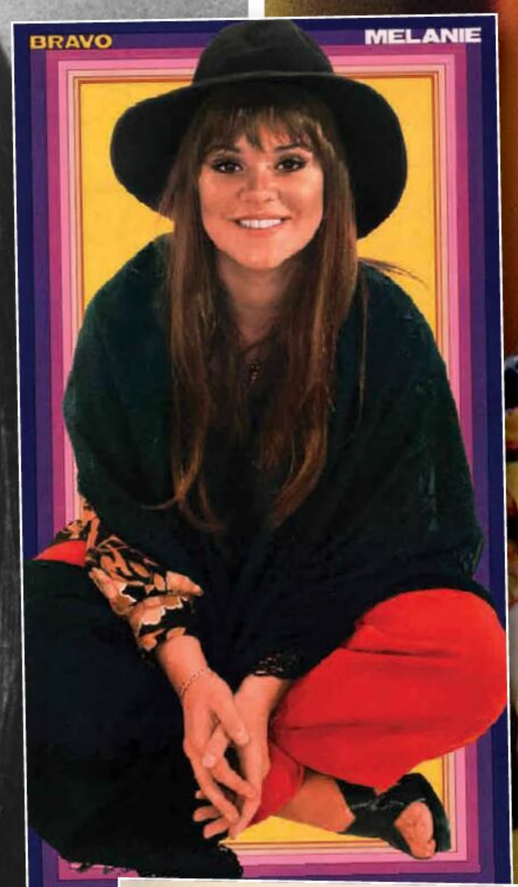
"Every time I had a new record out," she recalls, "this New York Jewish newspaper would come to interview me and I just thought, 'That's nice, they're interested in my music.' And then, out of the blue, after this had gone on for a few years, the writer asked me to talk about my Jewish upbringing. I looked at him… 'I'm not Jewish.' And the paper never talked to me again, because it turned out that [Buddah head] Neil Bogart had told them I was Jewish just to get more coverage."

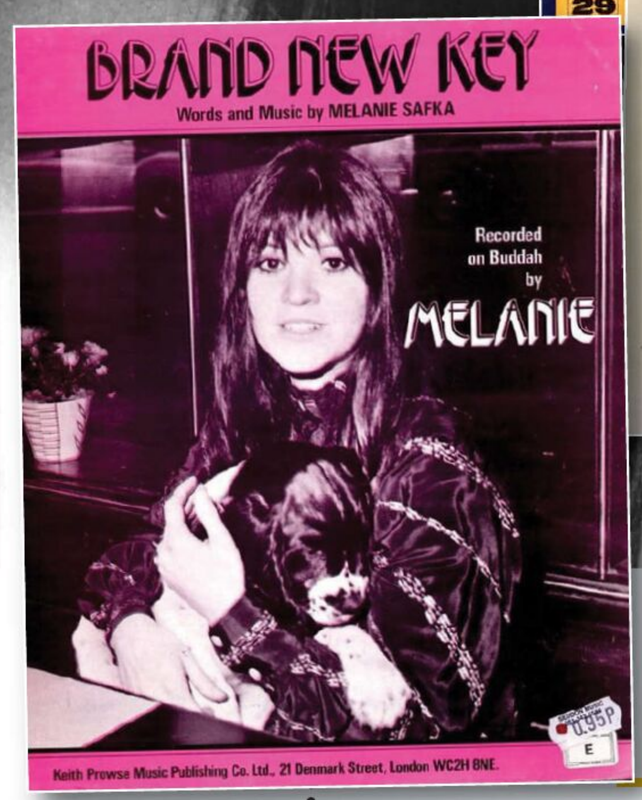
Buddah turned their sights on Europe and Melanie visited the UK for the first time in January '69, making her London concert debut with a surprise appearance at Tyrannosaurus Rex's Queen Elizabeth Hall show (at which David Bowie also appeared) on 13th January. There, according to writer Chris Welch, she "stomped her foot, sang 'St Louis Blues' and reminded me of a cross between Mother Courage and Judy Garland". On another occasion, she was persuaded to sit in with Yes onstage at The Revolution Club. "I went over mostly to meet people, do interviews and 'create the buzz', hang out and go to the Hard Rock and order hamburgers. The label would take me to The Revolution and other places that were trendy at the time. And I met Rod Stewart. He was the most famous person I'd ever met in my life, although he wasn't actually famous yet."

She returned to England in the early summer, this time to record her soundtrack to British movie *All The Right Noises*. But she also played several live shows in her own right, including the aforementioned Roundhouse debut, followed by an anti-apartheid show at the same venue.

She was the subject, too, of a half hour documentary for Granada television; indeed, as the UK's "mainstream" introduction to Melanie, she could not have asked for a more formidable vehicle. The camera clearly adores her, close up on her face as she performs some half dozen songs, including her latest single 'Bo Bo's Party' and an utterly breath-taking, and dramatic 'Tuning My Guitar'. She is seen onstage and off; plays guitar aboard a river boat, walks down the street, and answers every question with that disarming smile. Until, that is, she's asked if she ever fears losing control of her life. "I already have," she replies.

She flew back to New York in mid-August, and less than a fortnight later, she was on stage at Woodstock. Then it was back to London in September, where her duties included recording a session for John Peel's *Top Gear* – two songs reprised from the television special, three from her upcoming sophomore LP *Affectionately Melanie*. Peel was already an admirer. 'Close To It All' and 'Back In Town', both from Melanie's debut LP, had received





The eyes have it. Melanie in 1971; German magazine calendar; TV performance; 'Brand New Key' sheet music; '71's *Gather Me* and '72's *Stoneground Words*, released on her own label Neighborhood

airings on his show, the latter on the night before the Tyrannosaurus Rex gig – which, of course, Peel emceed. He certainly *wasn't* surprised by her appearance that night. "John was definitely a friend at that point," Melanie muses. "I went to his house once; he was sick with jaundice, so I visited him at his bedside. I didn't realise he was a big deal – if I'd known, I'd probably have been nervous. And we were really good friends for a time, me and this nice hippy guy who had a radio show."

Unfortunately, a year or so later, she also encountered the other side of that persona, the ease with which Peel could abandon artists if they no longer measured up to his definition of "cool". "I don't know what happened," she says. "But sometimes there were agendas… there were places I would be placed that didn't sit well with certain people. There's that attitude some people adopt, the cynical cool persona where something's only good if you've discovered it, and as soon as others find it, it's not cool any longer. I became the not-cool person."

What changed? It will be remembered that Peel lost his once-ferocious devotion to the newly abbreviated T Rex around this same time, his appreciation seemingly (although he denied it) diminished by old buddy Bolan's transition from underground hero to mainstream idol.

Melanie never underwent that same transformation. But Peel was forever aware, too, of his own standing as the mouthpiece of the underground, and perhaps… *just* perhaps… he saw her membership of that so-exclusive coterie take a serious knock, just two months after she appeared at the 1970 Isle Of Wight Festival. That was when one of the finest songs she'd written yet, 'Look What They've Done To My Song, Ma', was treated to a saccharin-sweet cover by a newly-formed band that represented everything the underground stood in opposition to: The New Seekers. It only reached #44 (Melanie's version had hit #39 at the end of '69) and it only hung around the chart for a couple of weeks. But the damage, it could be said, was done. Cool people did *not* have their songs covered by The New Seekers. (At least until they did 'Pinball Wizard'). And Peel only played the coolest.

Thankfully, Melanie had other supporters. Soon, she was spending so much time in the UK and, from there, Europe (The Netherlands was, and remains, an especially strong market) that she and Schekeryk took a flat in Chelsea. "I used to love going out, walking down King's Road, going to the Chelsea Drugstore, buying fun things. I was going to be English. I liked it a lot. I wanted to retire to Kent and become a farmer, growing my own organic things. It was a different time."

With 'The Nickel Song' her latest single, Melanie made a 10-minute appearance on BBC2 in the sensibly-titled, Mike Appleton-directed *Ten Minutes With Melanie* in May '71; the following month, as she prepared for Glastonbury, she filmed a half-hour *In Concert*, again for the Beeb. You can still catch it on YouTube; an exquisite performance that could easily rate among the most perfect documents of her entire career.

November delivered what remains Melanie's biggest ever British hit with her best-known song of all, 'Brand New Key' – #4 in the UK, #1 in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Of course, she was invited onto *Top Of The Pops*, but an ongoing US tour made that impossible, so the show did what it always did under those circumstances, and screened instead a peculiar home-made film that *kind* of told the story of the song. But not very well. Showcasing a blonde woman passing slowly by a large building, alternately on roller skates or a bicycle, it is, Melanie declares, "Very weird. I thought she would be roller-skating past a house in a neighbourhood, but at first it looked like a castle and I thought, 'Well, she's aiming high.'" Melanie admits, too, that she'd never seen the video until this year. "I imagine Peter might've hidden it from me."

'Brand New Key' was the first single from Melanie's latest album *Gather Me*. It's

"Buddah were taking tapes, out-takes, things that weren't ever supposed to be heard by people, and releasing them, and they said that every one was my 'new' album"

incredible to contemplate today, but it was her fifth LP of '71, and her eighth of the decade so far. A quantity that was nothing to do with her, as recent CD release *The Magic Bus,* recounting of a spring '72 interview with WBUS Florida DJ Curtis Schwartz, reveals. "The thing about the earlier albums," she sighs, was that "there were just too many of them. I didn't produce as much [new music] as is on those albums."

Purchasers and fans had no way of knowing that. They just assumed she was super prolific. The truth behind the tsunami, however, is less noble. Melanie broke away from Buddah in early '71 to launch her own Neighborhood Records label, often described as the first major artist-run label to form in the post-Apple era. And Buddah, she says, were furious. "They were really mad. Neil Bogart was seething, and there was one other guy who was evil. He really went out of his way to be sure that Buddah would always have their hands on me. They were taking tapes, out-takes, things that weren't ever supposed to be heard by people, and releasing them, and they said that every one was my 'new' album."

She doesn't disown everything released throughout this period – how can she when it includes some of her best-loved songs? Besides, one album is especially close to her heart. Recorded live at the first of two shows she played at Carnegie Hall in '70, *Leftover Wine* is definitely a high watermark – so much so that plans are afoot for her son Beau Jarred, Melanie's multi-instrumentalist producer and arranger since the death of Schekeryk, his father, to augment the original solo acoustic tapes with full orchestration.

In terms of her studio work, however, she remains adamant. As she says on *The Magic Bus*, her maiden release on Neighborhood, late '71's *Gather Me*, "is my first true, comfortable, honest album". It's also her most successful, roosting comfortably in the mid-teens on both the UK and US chart, and spinning off her next American hit 'Ring The Living Bell' and her next British one 'Someday I'll Be A Farmer'. At which point, we hit a moment of such shimmering synchronicity that we *have* to leap forward three years, to Melanie's next appearance in the UK Top 10, as the unwitting composer of west country yokels The Wurzels' 'The Combine Harvester' (see sidebar).

Buoyed by the success of 'Brand New Key', the next year saw Melanie playing some of the biggest and most prestigious venues of her life: The Crystal Palace Garden Party and The Royal Albert Hill topped that particular roster in the UK.

Neighborhood, too, was spreading its wings; Melanie's next album, the stellar *Stoneground Words*, appeared in '72, alongside the label's first outside signings, a single by New York music promoter Arte Kornfeld, a double live album by jazz rockers Rastus, and the Peter Schekeryk-produced Five Dollar Shoes.

The label's greatest coup, however, came with the recruitment of The Incredible String Band in '74. Melanie's love for the Incredibles had never been a secret, although it appears often to have caught people by surprise. Certainly Curtis Schwartz, again captured on *The Magic Bus*, is unable to hide his astonishment when she cites them as a favourite. "I never expected that."

Melanie finally met the group through artist Susie Watson-Taylor in '73. "She was going to do a cover for me, I think; she came to my hotel and we were talking and I saw her art, it was really interesting, and she was with The Incredible String Band. She introduced me, and we signed them to Neighborhood."

It was an easy friendship, although she admits, "I knew Mike [Heron] better, he was the 'out there' person, much more of a celebrity type; Robin [Williamson] was a lot more withdrawn and deep in thought, with his weird esoteric instruments that he'd bring along. I was very shy and he was very quiet; I don't think our conversations would have sparkled. But I was so in awe that they were on my label, and then they played with me at The Theatre Royal Drury Lane (in June '74 – it was released in 2020 as *Live 1974*)."

From London, the party relocated to New York, where Melanie housed the Incredibles in her family's own apartment on Central Park West, while they started recording their next album. "And the next thing we knew, they were breaking up."

Heron remained with Neighborhood, recording '75's *Mike Heron's Reputation* with Schekeryk producing. But the label was winding down and so was Melanie. She was a mother now; her daughter Leilah was born in '73, with Jordie, named (if not spelled) for the Child Ballad, following in '75. Parenthood seemed a lot more important than forever touring, recording, and even pursuing hits – her last (for now) hit single, in '73, was a cover of Goffin & King's 'Will You Love Me Tomorrow'.

She continued working, of course, and subsequent LPs have both their fans, and their indomitable moments. But the arrival of Melanie and Peter's third child and first son, Beau Jarred, reinforced her agenda through the '80s, and Schekeryk's death, while on tour with Melanie in October 2010, confirmed it. Their final album together, that year's *Ever Since You Never Heard Of Me*, remains Melanie's last official album.

Now resident in Nashville, Melanie remains active. She continues to gig, performing at anniversary celebrations of both The Isle Of Wight and Glastonbury festivals, and marking 50 years of Woodstock with the album *Songs I Sang At Woodstock*. She maintains a formidable online presence, and has also, finally, found the time to confront the rat's nest of conflicting (and often, it seems, downright dodgy) licensing agreements that have made a mockery of any attempts – by Melanie herself, or anyone else – to piece together the career-length anthology that she so richly deserves.

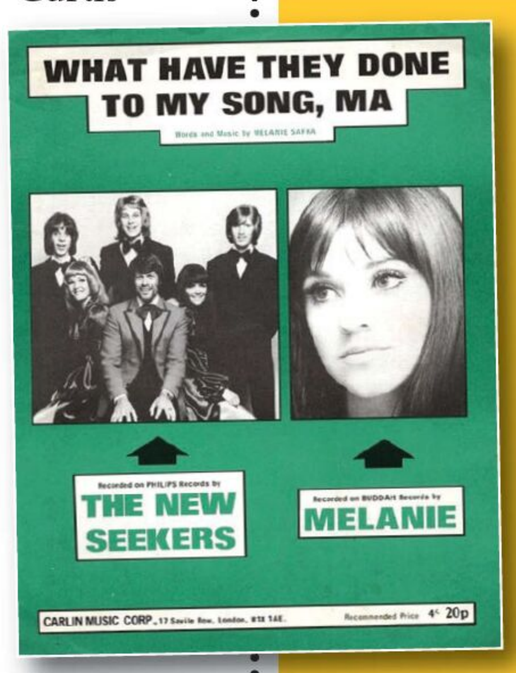
Her political beliefs, too, remain fervent – a recent Dutch tour even saw Beau Jarred spend a night in a police cell after diners at their hotel restaurant took exception to a slogan Melanie was sporting, supporting a local industrial dispute.

Most important of all, however, she continues fulfilling the late Karl Dallas's five-decade old prophesy. She is still a star. S!

The Magic Bus is out now on Y&T Music

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO MY SONG, MA?

FIVE BRITISH MELANIE COVERS... AND HER VERDICT



THE NEW SEEKERS
Look What They've Done To My Song, Ma **(1970)**
I never saw them perform, I didn't know who they were, but they had that hit. They really kind of aped my version, they didn't make it their own or anything. I was surprised when that happened. I didn't come into music with any awareness of that sort of thing, it's a whole other universe. I was totally trusting. Open, naive, vulnerable, just waiting for the next wonderful thing to happen.

MOTT THE HOOPLE
Lay Down **(1971)**
That was pretty crazy. I remember thinking, "Oh wow, a hard-rock band doing my song. That's cool".

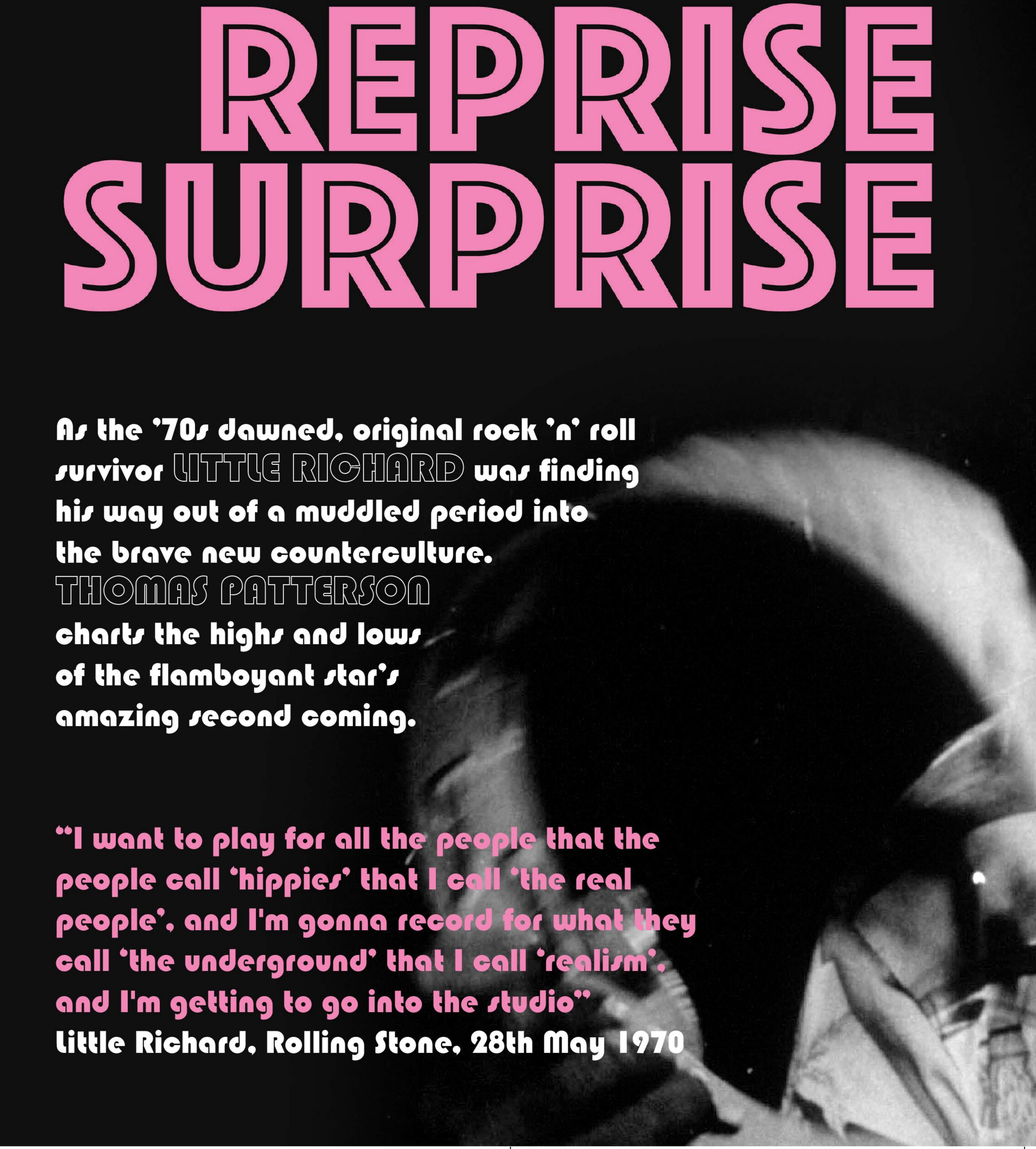
THE WURZELS
The Combine Harvester (Brand New Key) **(1976)**
That was gorgeous! I loved that. I didn't mind at all, especially being 'Brand New Key'. Why not? Make a funny song out of it. I had no idea that was going to happen. Peter might have been aware, but he didn't tell me. He certainly wouldn't have expected anything to happen with it, it was so ridiculous. In fact, it might even have been bigger than 'Brand New Key'.

DAVID DEVANT & HIS SPIRIT WIFE
Look What They've Done To My Song, Ma **(1993)**
I love it. And Beau said it's his favourite version of the song.

MORRISSEY
Some Say I Got Devil **(2019)**
I was flattered that he did it, but it was such an odd version. I wrote to him, because I didn't want to say nothing. "Hi, I heard 'Some Say'...", and I said a bunch of things to avoid saying I hated it, and he wrote back, "You hate it, don't you?"

THE REPRISE SURPRISE

As the '70s dawned, original rock 'n' roll survivor LITTLE RICHARD was finding his way out of a muddled period into the brave new counterculture. THOMAS PATTERSON charts the highs and lows of the flamboyant star's amazing second coming.



"I want to play for all the people that the people call 'hippies' that I call 'the real people', and I'm gonna record for what they call 'the underground' that I call 'realism', and I'm getting to go into the studio"

Little Richard, Rolling Stone, 28th May 1970

"The music business runs in a cycle and my time has come around again." Richard embraces the new decade

"This is the man who pioneered one-foot-on-top-of-the-piano keyboard stylings. This is the greatest rock 'n' roll singer in recorded history. This is the man of a thousand screams, shrieks, bellows, wails, cries, roars, hoots and falsetto filigree. This is Little Richard, the rill thing" – liner notes by Pete Johnson for Little Richard's 1970 album *The Rill Thing*.

If you picked up *Rolling Stone* magazine in the first half of 1970, you'd find cover stars tuned into the counterculture vibes of the year just gone: Paul McCartney, Dennis Hopper, David Crosby, Abbie Hoffman, Captain Beefheart, Charles Manson, even the cast of Antonioni movie *Zabriskie Point*. But amidst the hippies, yippies, heroes and villains that graced *Rolling Stone* in this nascent decade, the one dated the 28th May particularly stands out. The star? Little Richard. Sure, the man born Richard Wayne Penniman back in '32 was the trailblazer behind world-changing records like 'Tutti Frutti', 'Long Tall Sally', 'Good Golly Miss Molly', 'Keep A Knockin'' and 'Lucille', the Georgia peach, the quasar of rock, the originator, innovator, emancipator, *the* architect of rock 'n' roll. But he also hadn't had a hit since the '50s, and to the casual observer, his flamboyant stylings may have seemed old hat for a hip publication like *Rolling Stone* in the free-for-all psychedelic era. Yet Little Richard was starting a new chapter in his rollercoaster career, one buoyed by scene-stealing festival appearances that had seen him upstaging the likes of Janis Joplin and John Lennon and Yoko Ono in '69, and a newly released single 'Freedom Blues' that would finally take him back into the charts.

Written by David Dalton and titled "Little Richard: Child Of God", the *Rolling Stone* feature was frank and wide ranging, covering everything from Little Richard's breakthrough hits in '55 for the Specialty label to his retreat from fame when the man who sensationally made "a-wop-bop-a-loo-bop" a household phrase suddenly quit showbiz for bible college, struggling with stardom and his homosexuality (or should that be pansexuality, considering Little Richard's voracious sexual tastes?), and his return to the music world after rock promoter Don Arden brought him to Britain for a slew of shows in the early '60s, putting him into the orbit of young acolytes The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.
Little Richard himself was fearlessly funny in the interview, his own hype man, full of braggadocio, if not a touch incensed by the fact that former apprentices like James Brown and Jimi Hendrix had seen their careers rocket past his own. Most importantly, however, were the discussions about the new album he had just started recording down in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, his first in three years. That album would reach the world in September '70 with the title *The Rill Thing*, showing off a mighty new swamp-rock sound, the first of four LPs he would record for Reprise Records over the next three years – a remarkable, short-lived comeback that would remind the world all-too briefly just why Little Richard was the king of rock 'n' roll.

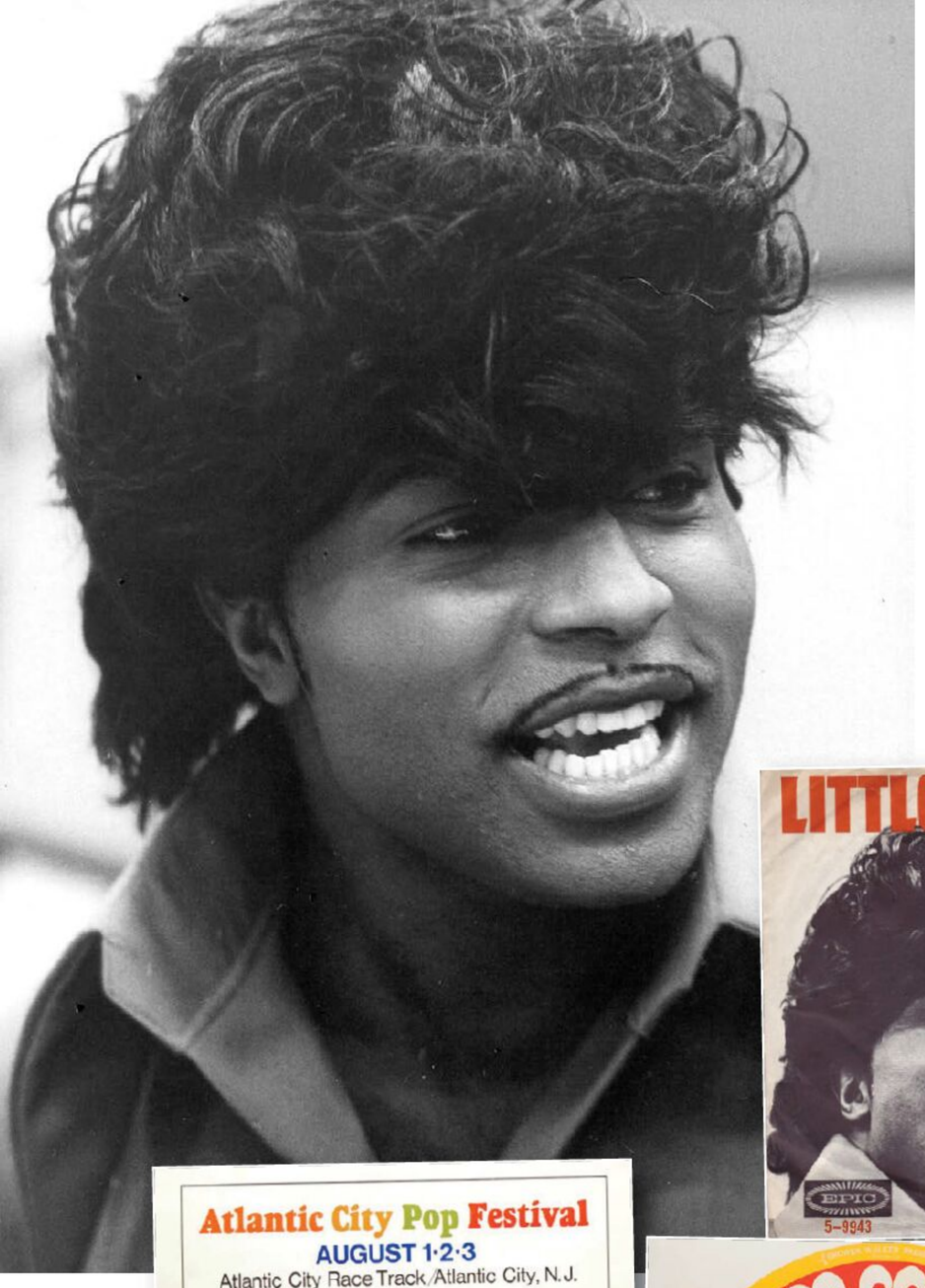
Rewind to 1969. Little Richard is without a record label, having experimented with various styles on his past few releases, none of which have landed him a much-needed chart hit. For the Okeh label, Richard recorded two albums in '67, both produced by troubled soul veteran Larry Williams, *The Explosive Little Richard*, which attempted to reposition Richard as a Wilson Pickett-style soul man, and cash-in "live" album *Little Richard's Greatest Hits Recorded Live* (not to be confused with *Little Richard Sings His Greatest Hits – Recorded Live*, an LP released on Modern in '66. Phew!) plus, more interestingly, a 45 recorded at Abbey Road, a barnstorming cover of Bobby Marchan's 'Get Down With It', overseen by Pink Floyd producer Norman Smith, featuring killer guitar from Big Jim Sullivan and released in the UK on Columbia. The following year Richard would move to Brunswick for a funky cut called 'Soul Train' produced by Willie Henderson and a further 45, a brilliantly beefed-up cover of the traditional blues number 'Baby Don't You Tear My Clothes', writing credit cheekily attributed to Richard and producer JW Alexander, backed with 'Stingy Jenny', an adaptation of Bessie Smith's 'I Got What It Takes', credited to Richard's old friend and inspiration Esquerita (more on whom later).

Sadly, the public weren't buying what Richard was offering despite some decent reviews in the press (Jim Payne in *Crawdaddy!* was particularly effusive about *The Explosive Little Richard*, noting "The amazing thing is that when you start listening to some of the stuff he was doing in the early '50s you find out that it's really a very contemporary sound. The fact that Mitch Ryder and others have made it recently with Little Richard tunes, and countless others have cashed in with a Little Richard style (e.g., The Beatles) is some sort of tribute to the inherent worth of the sounds he has put out.")

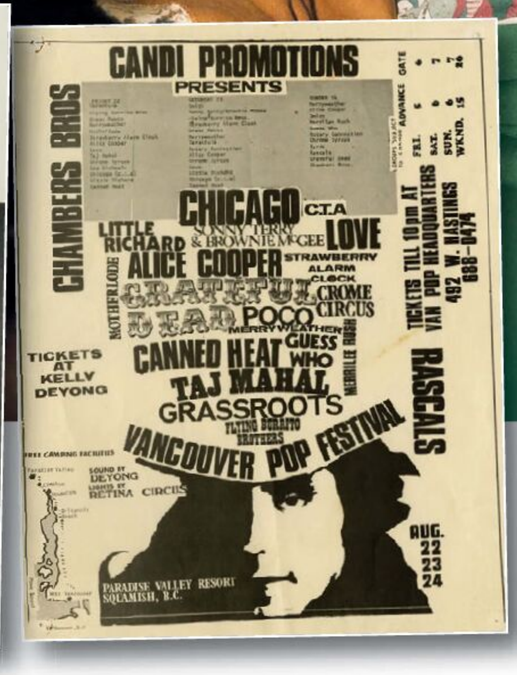
Still, if the records weren't selling, Television did come calling in the form of The Monkees' NBC TV special *33 1/3 Revolutions Per Monkee*, in which Richard played a classic '50s rock medley alongside Fats Domino and Jerry Lee Lewis, anticipating the rock 'n' roll revival that would soon kick off in earnest with groups like Sha Na Na, the Broadway musical *Grease* and movie *American Graffiti*. Airing on 14th April '69, *33 1/3 Revolutions Per Monkee* was a confused production, focusing more on co-stars Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll than The Monkees themselves, and Richard was particularly scathing about the show, a year later telling David Dalton in *Rolling Stone*, "I hated that, they didn't give me no time. They was really trying to rebuild The Monkees and they had artists like me and Fats and Jerry Lee Lewis to build them up." Yet, if Richard didn't like the final product, he looked terrific in it, showing off both his outlandishly tall hair-do (which had been growing ever bigger as the '60s progressed) and a mirrored pant suit, a taster of outrageous things to come wardrobe-wise in the '70s.

All the while, Little Richard remained a top live drawer, and one look at his tour schedule for '69 shows an exhausting round of live shows across North America, with seemingly endless residencies at Isy's Supper Club in Vancouver, the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas, the Latin Casino in Baltimore, the Penthouse in Seattle and Harrah's Club in Reno to name but a few, Richard still deserving of the "hardest working man in showbusiness" moniker pinched by his former protégé James Brown. Yet there was one show in particular that would prove a milestone for Richard – The Atlantic City Pop Festival in New Jersey, in August '69. Today overshadowed by Woodstock, which would take place two weeks later, The Atlantic City Pop Festival boasted a line-up almost Woodstock's equal, with acts including Jefferson Airplane, The Byrds, The Mothers Of Invention, Tim Buckley, Joni Mitchell and Creedence Clearwater Revival; and somehow, Richard's booking agents Associated Booking Corporation had not only got their man on the bill, they'd booked him the final spot on the final day, taking the stage immediately after Janis Joplin – although

"I started gleaming and I just took over the show. The audience was quiet at first. THEY WERE SO YOUNG, THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS, but when they realised what was happening they just went wild"



Richard unwittingly ushers in his rebirth with 1967's 'Get Down With It'; the outlandishly tall hair-do he'd cultivated in the '60s; '69 pop festival appearances



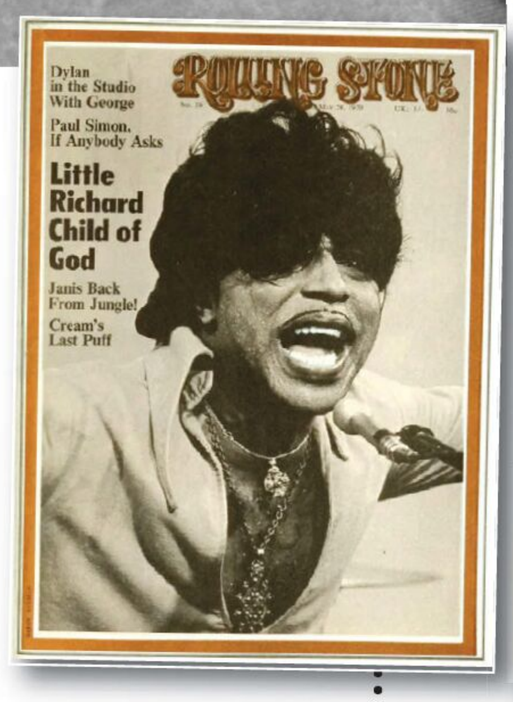
as Richard describes in Charles White's terrific warts-and-all biography *The Life And Times Of Little Richard*, his set was nearly cancelled. "It had started raining and I had to close the show. Janis was screaming. She had been sucking on that Southern Comfort bottle. When she took off her shoes I thought, Oh Lord… She stopped the whole thing. Got three standing ovations. She was very dangerous, that girl. Well, the promoters came and said they were satisfied that was a fitting ending to the festival and I needn't go on. They would pay me anyway. I said I wanted to go on… I got them to shine just the spotlights on me. I started gleaming and I just took over the show. The audience was quiet at first. They were so young, they didn't know who I was, but when they realised what was happening they just went wild… The newspapers the next day were full of it. They gave just a little space to Janis, and the headlines said how incredible it was that Little Richard was able to come behind Janis Joplin and eclipse her when she had totally wrecked the audience."

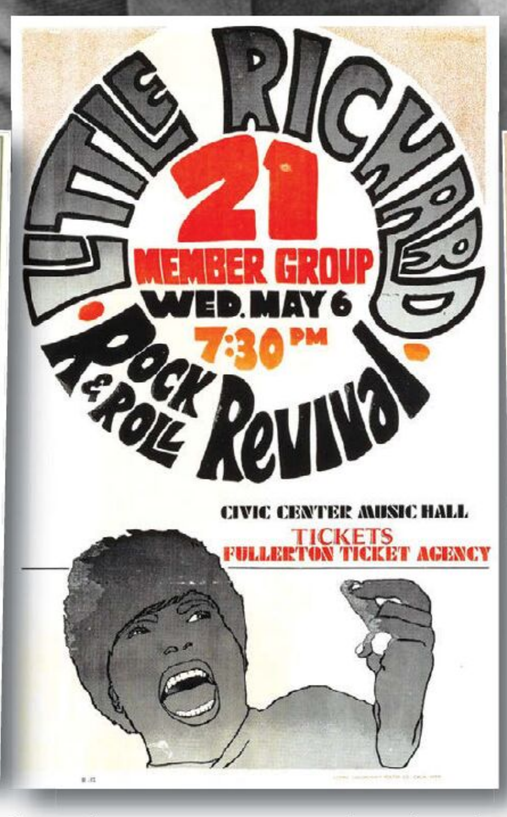
Contemporary reviews were incendiary, Richard clearly wowing an audience of teens who were barely out of nappies back when Richard was enjoying his first hits back in '55. Reviews were similarly ecstatic for Richard's subsequent August engagements, which included a night in New York at The Schafer Music Festival In Central Park and a show at Madison Square Gardens (although we should perhaps gloss over an extraordinary set the week after Woodstock at the rain-lashed Vancouver Pop Festival alongside The Strawberry Alarm Clock, Flying Burrito Brothers, Love, Zombies and Rotary Connection, at which Richard riled up a bunch of motorbike gangs with his flamboyant, gender-bending set and nearly caused a bad-vibe biker riot several months ahead of Altamont). Richard was back, and he knew it, telling Mike Gormley of *Detroit Free Press* on 2nd September, "The music business runs in a cycle and my time has come around again. I'm doing a thing in Toronto soon with Gene Vincent and others. That should be a gas."

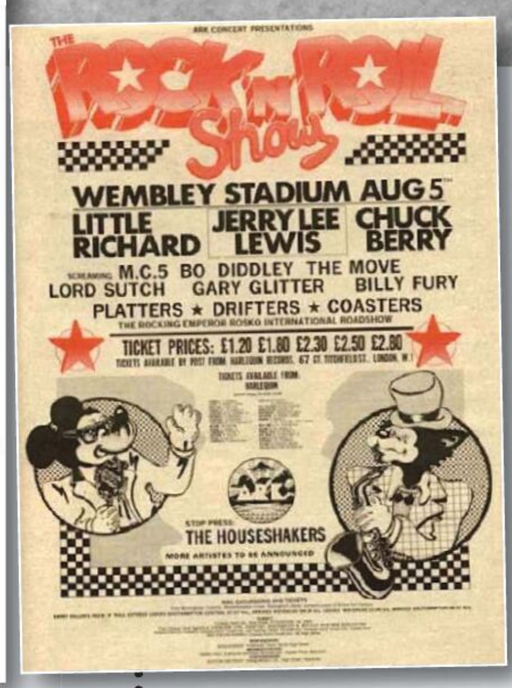
That show would be the Toronto Rock 'n' Roll Revival, which positioned old school rock artists like Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and, of course, Little Richard alongside modern acts such as Alice Cooper, Chicago, Tony Joe White and The Doors, with a surprise headline act in the shape of John Lennon and Yoko Ono performing as The Plastic Ono Band. Captured on film by DA Pennebaker and released as *Sweet Toronto* in '71, the footage shows an explosive Little Richard overshadowing an over-confident and under-rehearsed Plastic Ono Band, sealing Little Richard's revival – no wonder his entire set would be released as a standalone movie called *Little Richard: Keep On Rockin'* in '70.

As the year wore on, the music venues that booked Little Richard grew increasingly hip, and The Fillmore West and The Whisky A Go Go both hosted him (although Richard contested that the only reason such venues hadn't previously booked him was because they couldn't afford him). Concert promoters weren't the only people paying attention to Little Richard as '69 came to a close; record labels were also coming to the conclusion that it might just be worth having the king of rock 'n' roll on their roster. Interviews at the time have a typically effusive Little Richard declaring countless labels are throwing money at him, desperate for him to sign, including The Beatles' Apple, but whether hyperbolic claims or not, the label that would eventually win Richard's signature was one of the hippest on the block: Reprise. Although formed in '60 by Frank Sinatra as a home for himself and his crooner pals, by '69 Reprise was the hottest rock label in town, a subsidiary of Warners led by respected record man Mo Ostin, a maverick with wide-ranging tastes who had signed such artists as former Little

Peace and love at the August 1972 Rock 'n' Roll Show, London; 28th May '70 *Rolling Stone* cover story; more festival shows; indispensible early '70s 45s and LPs (opposite)







Richard sidesman Jimi Hendrix, Neil Young, The Kinks, Arlo Guthrie and even Fats Domino, whose Beatles-cover sporting album *Fats Is Back* hit record stores in '68.

Nineteen-seventy would prove a particularly fruitful year for Ostin and Reprise, bringing Fleetwood Mac, The Beach Boys and Ry Cooder onto the roster, alongside, of course, the one and only Little Richard. With no time to waste, Richard and his long-term manager Robert 'Bumps' Blackwell headed down to Rick Hall's fabled FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama for a pair of self-produced sessions in March and June '70. FAME had seen legendary artists like Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, The Rolling Stones and Solomon Burke pitch up in pursuit of its singular soulful sound, a draw for a Richard in search of a sound that could propel him into the new decade. And what a sound it was.

Backed by new in-house band The Fame Gang (the previous in-house band, the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, having recently set out on their own), Richard created magic in Muscle Shoals, pumping out a series of funky R&B infused with a country-rock vibe that positioned him somewhere between Sly Stone, Tony Joe White and Little Richard of old. Single 'Greenwood, Mississippi', penned by crack guitarists Travis Wammack and Albert Lowe Jr, was a particular delight, a Creedence-esque stomper packed with twangy guitars that would also eventually be covered by Tom Jones, who coincidentally was also in town and turned up to watch Little Richard record his own take in Alabama. As Wammack told Bill Dahl in the liner notes for new Little Richard singles compilation *The Complete Atlantic & Reprise Singles,* "Little Richard and his entourage came in the studio door, wanting to record. So, everything's set up, and I told him, 'We wrote a song a couple of weeks ago, and we both agree it'd be a great song for you or John Fogerty.' So I took him out in my pick-up truck and played the cassette of the demo that we recorded on 'Greenwood Mississippi'. He loved it. He said, 'I'm gonna record that!'"

Other tracks recorded at FAME included a rip-roaring cover of The Beatles' 'I Saw Her Standing There', a nod back to the band who owed so much to Little Richard; a 10-minute funky jam which would give its name to the whole album, 'The Rill Thing'; and most intriguingly, a couple of tracks co-credited to Esquerita, the cult huge-haired soul man who inspired and in turn took inspiration from Little Richard, but whose career never quite reached the same heights. First was 'Freedom Blues', an ode to the civil rights movement that could happily sit on any country-funk compilation. The album's lead single, it was released in April '70 and triumphantly rose to #47 in the US, paying off Reprise's gamble on signing the old school rock 'n' roller. Second was 'Dew Drop Inn', a tribute to the storied New Orleans R&B club, first recorded as a single by Esquerita, using the name Eskew Reeder, back in '67. It all made for an undeniably strong set, hitting shops in

August and trailed with radio promo spots in which Little Richard confidently declared, "This is the album that brought me back, the record that brought me back, to 'Freedom Blues', when I was gone a long time, I went away but I'm back with this great, great album *The Rill Thing* by Little Richard."

Despite the album's obvious high quality, reviews were mixed, with Little Richard purists decrying his new direction, Geoffrey Cannon in *The Guardian* claiming it "far less valuable" than a pair newly released greatest hit comps on label Sonet. Yet those who dug it *rilly* dug it, Joel Selvin claiming in *Rolling Stone* that "*The Rill Thing* represents a major artistic triumph for Little Richard… This isn't a comeback album because Little Richard hasn't been anywhere… All told, *The Rill Thing* is a most significant chapter in the living legend of the greatest rock 'n' roll singer ever."

Little Richard, meanwhile, jumped on the promo train, hyping up the album everywhere he could. A curious new component of Little Richard's comeback saw him becoming a regular draw on US chat shows, as television producers and hosts realised what a good guest he made, outrageously camp, with his own exuberant catch phrase "Shut Up!" and an endless supply of baroque outfits. Describing himself "the bronze Liberace", Richard plied his wares for Dick Cavett, Johnny Carson, Mike Douglas and on, always ready with a quick anecdote and energetic piano-climbing performance. It always made for excellent TV but was surely confusing for cool young record buyers when trying to reconcile the ostentatious cape-wearing chat show creation with the semi-serious artist now being touted by Reprise.

There was no time to stop and think, however, and as '71 arrived, Little Richard continued his gruelling live show/chat show career. There was more music to be made for Reprise, starting with a standalone single, 'Shake A Hand (If You Can)', recorded at Criteria Studios in Miami under the direction of Jerry Wexler and Tom Dowd. A fiery soul-gospel take on the Joe Morris-penned track, it should have been a shoo-in for *The Blues Brothers* movie several years later. It would be Little Richard's only session with famed Atlantic men Wexler and Dowd, a shame as the results were terrific, and for his second album for Reprise, he headed to Amigo Studios in North Hollywood in the summer of '71 for an album recorded under the eye of producer HB Barnum that hewed a little closer to the old Little Richard sound, albeit with a few outliers in the shape of funky covers of 'Brown Sugar' and 'Born On The Bayou', and single 'Green Power', a moody slow-burning groove, atypical of Little Richard and totally excellent. The album's title, meanwhile, was purposely chosen to emphasise just how Little Richard should be considered: *The King Of Rock And Roll*.

It was a statement, a belief, an epithet which defined Little Richard, and he would lend his talents and stature to a number of younger rock artists during this period, apparently at the behest of the *other* king of rock 'n' roll, Elvis Presley. As Richard told David Dalton in *Rolling Stone* in March '71, "Elvis came to my dressing room when I was in Las Vegas, and he told me, 'Richard, they are not going to let you in. They don't own you, so they are going to make it hard for you.' That's when he advised me to take up these offers I'd been getting to make records with all these groups. See, they'd like to lock me up in Las Vegas – like they did with Fats – and let my name die. They don't *want* the beauty to speak, you understand?"

The groups in question included The James Gang, Delaney & Bonnie, Jefferson Airplane, Canned Heat and Christian rocker Mylon LeFevre, all of whom clearly did want Little Richard's beauty. He provided it to them willingly. Recorded in Cleveland, The James Gang track 'But I Try' wouldn't see a proper a release until 2012, when it cropped up on Joe Walsh's album *Analog Man* but it remains a doozy of a rocker. The Mylon cut, a remake of old hit 'He's Not Just A Soldier' appeared on '72 album *Over The Influence*, produced by Allen Toussaint, with an appearance by Dr John.

All the while, record labels across the country were cashing in on Little Richard's newly revitalised career for all it was worth, with cut-price comps of old material hitting stores, such as *Mr Big* on Joy Records, which contained tracks recorded in '64/65 for the Veejay label. Particularly crass was *Friends From The Beginning*, a Jimi Hendrix/Little Richard crossover album on LA funk/soul label ALA, released in '72, two years after Hendrix's death, which tried to make some desperate milage out of the fact that pre-fame Jimi had played with Little Richard's band under the name Maurice James, before hitting the big time himself.

Next up for Little Richard's own career were two cuts for the soundtrack to Goldie Hawn/Warren Beatty comedy *$* (aka *Dollar$*), produced by Quincy Jones, an old acquaintance of Richard's, having accompanied him on '61 gospel album *The King Of The Gospel Singers: Little Richard*. Featuring other Reprise artists like Roberta Flack and Doug Kershaw, the Little Richard cuts, penned by Quincy Jones, are the album standouts. 'Do It – To It' is a goodtime groover awash with Richard's trademark "whoos", whilst 'Money Is' is a stone-cold killer, replete with funky wah-wah guitar courtesy of David T Walker. It's so good, one only wishes Richard had been given an entire Blaxploitation soundtrack of his own.

Walker, the ultra-talented solo artist and session man for the likes of Stevie Wonder and The Jackson 5, was back for some of the sessions that Richard would embark on next. Setting up stall at The Record Plant in West Hollywood for 12 days in April '72, Little Richard recorded enough tracks for two albums of all original material under the direction of Bumps Blackwell. As Richard told Andrew Tyler of *Disc* on 19th August '72, "I also got a new album finished called *The Second Coming Of Little Richard* and another one called *The Southern Child*. I'm milking a cow on the cover and you've never seen a cow milked the way I milk this cow."

The Second Coming, with its slightly blasphemous title and glorious airbrush cover art, split the difference between the old Little Richard sound on songs like

"I was the first one, 'cause I've been wearing the long hair and fancy clothes. I've been doing it all my life, so I WAS THE FIRST HIPPIE, yeah, in Macon, Georgia"

Triumphant in London, 1972; the same year's *The Second Coming* and unreleased *Southern Child*. "You've never seen a cow milked the way I milk this cow"

single 'Mockingbird Sally' and cuts such as 'It Ain't What You Do, It's The Way How You Do It' (co-written by pedal steel guitarist Sneaky Pete Kleinow), a spry country-rock groover that sounded like it sprang from the pen of Michael Nesmith or Duane Allman. It was a track that could have appeared on Little Richard's other new album, *Southern Child*, a brilliant left turn into out-and-out country, with a smattering of excellent country-funk cuts alongside Hank Williams' style ballads that could have positioned Richard as a new Charley Pride (or at least Johnny Adams). Sadly nobody would get to hear Richard's trip to the country for several decades, as despite being promoted by Little Richard on numerous US chat shows, *Southern Child* was shelved, only seeing the light several decades later, first on Rhino box set *King Of Rock And Roll: The Complete Reprise Recordings* in 2005, and then as an expanded standalone release on Omnivore in 2020, with original cover art that confirms you have indeed not seen a cow milked the way Little Richard milks a cow.

The reason *Southern Child* was pulled from release is unclear. Perhaps it's simply that despite Reprise's investment in Little Richard, his records hadn't been selling since initial single 'Freedom Blues'. More likely, it's that it was simply too much of a musical departure in a career that was schizophrenic enough. As time passed, Little Richard was viewed by some as too white for black soul audiences and too retro for the young white audiences who had hijacked rock wholesale from black America. Indeed, even Little Richard wasn't entirely sure where his sound, style and audience lay, hedging his bets with performances that oscillated between hip clubs and square Vegas residencies, topped off with rock revival concerts such as The London Rock 'n' Roll Show, held at Wembley Stadium in August '72, at which he appeared alongside Bill Haley and Chuck Berry, and younger acts such as Wizzard, MC5 and Gary Glitter, performing old '50s hits rather than any of his excellent new material.

When '73 rolled round, Little Richard had just turned 40. It had come to pass that *The Second Coming* didn't sell, *Southern Child* didn't come, and he was dropped by Reprise. Richard would claim he left the label because they didn't promote his albums, which may have some truth to it, but the more likely story is that Reprise let him go when Mo Ostin was promoted to chairman and CEO of Warner Bros., and no longer had time to champion the former king of rock 'n' roll. Moving on from Reprise, Little Richard would record a cheap album for United, rushed out with little fanfare, called *Right Now!* Apparently recorded in one night in Muscle Shoals, with the list of session players who aided Little Richard now sadly lost, the album isn't up to the standard of *The Rill Thing* but is worth checking out for rollicking cut 'Mississippi' and double entendre-stuffed closing cut 'Hot Nuts'. Little Richard would see out '73 with a gospel 45 called 'In The Middle Of The Night' for independent label The Greene Mountain Records Company (owned by Iron Butterfly and Buffalo Springfield associate Charles Greene). The single would ironically chart, reaching #71 on the US R&B chart, but it was scant consolation after his departure from Reprise and a universal shrug at *Right Now!*

The single would be Little Richard's last major creative hurrah for a while, and unlike contemporaries Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly and Fats Domino, he wouldn't even make it onto the triple platinum-selling soundtrack for '73 rock 'n' roll movie *American Graffiti* due to contractual disputes. Perhaps if he'd hung on a little while longer, he could have become a part of the glam-rock scene that aped his look. Or more possibly, he could have looked towards the disco scene, an often outrageous, African-American, gay-centric music world that owed so much to Little Richard's trailblazing career. Or maybe he could have parlayed his music into the charts in some other way, in the same fashion as Elton John, a hot young musician not averse to piano pyrotechnics and a flamboyant outfit, who just so happened to support Little Richard back in '66 when he was plain old Reginald Dwight in a band called Bluesology. Alas, none of that happened, and Little Richard spent the immediate post-Reprise years in a blizzard of cocaine, before embarking on a sober and pious new calling in the late '70s as a bible salesman on TV.

Yet no matter how badly things went, Little Richard always knew rock 'n' roll – and therefore his own career – would never truly die. As he told Danny Holloway of the *NME* in November '72, "Rock and roll is THE thing. The music field works in a cycle – they tried to call it "acid-rock", they tried to call it "be-bop" and they tried to call it the record hop but it's still old rock. Y'understand? Rock and roll is here to stay." S!

With thanks to Brad Rosenberger and Bill Dahl

The Complete Atlantic & Reprise Singles is out now on Real Gone. Expanded editions of The Rill Thing, The King Of Rock And Roll, Southern Child and The Second Coming are out on Omnivore

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Reissues, anthologies and compilations

Looking Through The Eyes Of The World

BEN PHILLIPSON immerses himself in a series of live shows that marked a crucial turning point in the Dead's history

GRATEFUL DEAD
Here Comes Sunshine 1973
★★★★
RHINO 17-CD BOX SET

No other band have served their audience more faithfully and continually than The Grateful Dead. Aside from the more mystical aspects of that relationship, a good deal stems from the band's foresight in making every live show unique, and in recording those performances wherever possible. While songs would come and go from their on-stage repertoire, the pool of songs at their disposal by 1973 was huge, which makes this mammoth 17-disc box set of five outdoor shows from that summer somehow necessary, even if only in the eyes of the devoted.

Seventy-three saw the Dead in transition. The death of Pigpen in March had drawn a curtain under their opening act, while the formation of their own record label and their increasing draw as a live act showed that the Dead were an increasingly serious proposition. Their music was changing too, albeit more subtly. A slew of fine new Garcia/Hunter songs like 'Here Comes Sunshine' and 'China Doll' had appeared in the repertoire by the time they appeared in Des Moines on 13th May, alongside the material that had sustained the group through their celebrated European tour the previous year. Most intriguingly, they appeared to be hitting a new peak, the "song suites" that unfolded during their second sets going ever further into feats of jazz-infused daring that worked because the Dead were a band that put their individual egos aside and got on with the business of listening to each other.

For the committed, *Here Comes Sunshine* is almost essential, consisting of five complete shows, all previously unreleased. For the rest of us, it's sometimes harder work. These were "sub mixes", recorded direct to two-track tape, making later remixing impossible and they expose the more ragged aspects of those nights onstage, the Dead's notoriously shaky vocal blend coming under scrutiny in a way that isn't always an easy listen. Be grateful then that the notorious Owsley Stanley was behind the tape board for two stadium shows in Washington in June. The climax of the box set, the recording of the second of these on 10th June, is a document which, for much of its 280-minute duration, proves the Dead's brilliance as an onstage conduit for whatever was in the air at the time.

While opening sets could tend to meander, they evidently mean business from the beginning via Bonnie Dobson's cautionary and apocalyptic 'Morning Dew', and while the material that follows is a typically mixed bag, this is a particularly purposeful incarnation of the band, comfortably letting things unfold at their natural pace. Reaching a peak with 'Bird Song' towards the end of that first set, it's easy to highlight Jerry Garcia: his playing is continually both subtle and sublime here, but the group at its best was full of star players all contributing to the greater good. Bill Kreutzmann in particular inspires the flow with inventive melodic drumming, while Phil Lesh's bass seems to find exactly the right spaces for counterpoints that shouldn't work, yet always do. The unison jam that unfolds on 'Eyes Of The World' and the spacious atmospheres on the ensuing 'Stella Blue' represent this aspect of the group in its most positive light, always heading for the next frontier.

The final hour featuring members of the Allman Brothers is something of a rarity: a "super session" that far exceeds expectation, with the assembled band seeming to ring out every last drop on a storming 'Not Fade Away'/'Goin' Down The Road Feeling Bad'. This 10th June show justifies its fine reputation and its standalone release here as an eight-LP set is probably the one to check, but if you're heading fully down the rabbit hole, *Here Comes Sunshine* is yet another worthwhile addition to an already huge discography.

"The 'song suites' that unfolded during their second sets go ever further into feats of jazz-infused daring that worked because the Dead were a band that put their individual egos aside and got on with the business of listening to each other"

Weir, Lesh and Garcia bring the sunshine

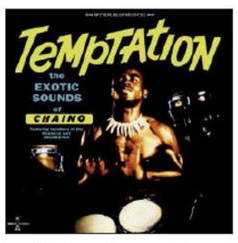
CANDY CLAWS
Ceres & Calypso In The Deep Time
★★★★
TWOSYLLABLE LP

A cult favourite following its release, Candy Claws' third and final album celebrates its 10-year anniversary with a lush vinyl reissue. The beguiling powers of the music made by Ryan Hover, K Hover and Hank Bertholf remain unaltered. It's an escapism-friendly crossroads of dream-pop, fanciful neo-psych and lost-in-abstraction shoegaze.

Ceres & Calypso In The Deep Time is a concept album of sorts, the story of a seal and a girl travelling through the Mesozoic Era. Still, you're welcome to just get lost in the multitudinous layers of sound. 'White Seal (Shell & Spine)' evokes Broadcast, 'Fallen Tree Bridge (Brave Rainbow Rider)' swings with a classic French pop feel and there is a hint of vintage easy listening to the otherworldliness of 'Birth Of The Flower (Seagreen)'. A gloriously dense listening experience, instead of feeling challenging, the album proves bewitching and rewarding, full of siren-like incantations.

Camilla Aisa

CHAINO
Temptation
★★★★
MODERN HARMONIC LP



If you come across this piece of exotica and picture a tight group of musical cohorts coming together to record sounds inspired by their shared traveling experiences, well, think again.

The bulk of *Temptation* was recorded in Belgium by the Francis Bay Orchestra around 1957. It was a discerning producer (Kirby Allen) who got his hands on the tapes soon after that thought of replacing all percussive contributions with new ones recorded for the occasion by the far more gifted Chaino (aka Leon Johnson). Allen came up with a whole persona for his chosen star, going as far as to trade his actual American childhood for the more marketable story of an orphan born in Central Africa, and suggesting eye-catching costumes. The result was an album (released around '60 under a variety of titles) that got little attention; 63 years later, it's a perfect encapsulation of exotica's undying conga and bongo-driven charms.

Camilla Aisa

RAY CHARLES
In Concert In The Sixties
★★★★
1960S LP

This wide-ranging *pot pourri* of archive radio and TV broadcasts pulls together a selection of material from Europe, the US and Brazil spanning the years 1958-70. From late '50s and early '60s appearances at the Newport and Antibes Jazz Festivals, the Paris Olympia and a Brazilian TV special to guest spots on the Ed Sullivan and Johnny Cash shows from late '67 and early '70 respectively, there are rich pickings here drawn from across 12 eventful years of Ray's storied career.

Backed throughout by the ubiquitous Raelettes, the massed ranks of The Ray Charles Orchestra and, on those '67-68 cuts, also featuring Billy Preston's Hammond organ skills, the plentiful highlights include 'What'd I Say', 'Let's Go Get Stoned', 'I Don't Need No Doctor', 'Hit The Road Jack' and 'Unchain My Heart'. As a collection of snapshots of soulful R&B from the master this stuff hits the spot every time.

Grahame Bent

MARTIN DENNY
Deep Exotica: Music From Martin Denny's Lush Lounge
★★★★
RIGHTEOUS 2-CD

Welcome to the enchanted world of Martin Denny high priest of exotica. Awash with maverick piano, cascading waves of dreamy vibraphone, ethnic percussion and accompanying bird calls, this captivating double CD anthology brings together the four albums that essentially defined this most seductive of sub genres: *Exotica, Exotica II*, *Exotica III* and *Quiet Village*, all released on Liberty in the late '50s.

Miraculously capturing the intrigue, mystery and sensuality of faraway places, Denny's original creations and arrangements of standards and show tunes were the tailor-made audio escape route for legions of beatniks, barflys, dreamers and would be castaways desperate to flee the rat race of '50s America. The appeal of these sublimely crafted tropical, Polynesian and oriental musical vignettes remains undiminished as the passport to a parallel musical universe where the horizons are unlimited, the sun never sets and the colours are never less than deeply saturated.

Grahame Bent

EDGE
Edge
★★★
RIDINGEASY LP

Nineteen-seventy was an odd year in the USA. If you make the unfair assumption that each new band was created in a boardroom instead of a sweaty basement, you will imagine that the meeting begins with, "Alright, fellas. Are we this new hard-rock thing, this new back-to-the-land thing, the old floating eyeball thing, or just pop music? Also: horses or Harleys in the cover photo?" And if you only listen to the first several seconds of this

Continues over

Undefeated Champions

'Venus And Serena' and 'Bleed Forever' overflow with effortless melodic charm, 'Out Of Control' channels The Stooges, 'The Undefeated' welds 'To Love Somebody' to a Jamaican beach scene, while seven-minute closer 'Slow Life', on which techno bleeps meet string-driven country-rock (not unusual in Furryworld), quickly became SFA's live show opener. As always, the group's arrangements are at once complex and natural, the vocal interplay deep and rich, the ideas innovative and gently provocative without sounding forced or contrived.

This 20th anniversary edition spreads the remastered album over four sides and offers a 3-CD version containing two discs of bonus tracks. *Solvent Abuse Awareness Week* gathers B-sides on which *Smile*-era Beach Boys haunt a third variation of album segue 'Father Father', pedal steel adorns 'Summer Snow' (with its "phantom power" lyric) and the 20-minute live version of 'The Man Don't Give A Fuck' introduces a colossal, brain-frying 10-minute techno passage. *I Need No Guidance; Just Your Patience* collects 25 demos, works-in-progress and alternate versions that offer insight into *Phantom Power*'s organic origins and prove that, even left to their own devices in a no-pressure demo situation, SFA could conjure magic.

Andy Morten

SUPER FURRY ANIMALS
Phantom Power
★★★★★
BMG 3-CD/2-LP

Deciding that they needed to simplify the album-making process after the expense and excess of 2001's *Rings Around The World*, Super Furry Animals experimented with a number of themes and concepts before arriving at a set of short, melodic songs about "broken relationships and war", which they proceeded to record and produce in their own Cardiff studio. Many of these songs were written on acoustic guitars and are in the same key, a delicious subtlety that must have appealed to the group's mischievous side and imbues the album with an autumnal warmth largely missing from *Rings*. *Phantom Power* hit #4 in the UK and spawned two Top 40 singles, including glorious heat-haze opener 'Hello Sunshine'. Who else would choose to open such a crucial album in their career with a sample from an obscure 1969 track by teenage sister act Wendy & Bonnie?

In honesty, there are half a dozen potential singles here. 'Liberty Belle',

LP, you'll quickly decide which choice they made and you'll move on. This would be an error.

You've probably seen two LPs with similar covers, on a very small label, by bands called American Revolution and The Boston Tea Party, from the tail end of the '60s. Upon splitting up, members of both reformed as Edge and moved well past the endearingly goofy psychedelia of those two bands into that strange hybrid motorbikes-on-the-farm territory where Steppenwolf and Delaney & Bonnie have adjoining rooms. It's great.

Mike Fornatale

FRIJID PINK
The Deram Recordings 1970-71
★★

ESOTERIC 2-CD

Detroit band Frijid Pink were somewhat of a one hit wonder by way of their hard-rock cover of 'House Of The Rising Sun'. A lumbering beast, like Blue Cheer's cover of 'Summertime Blues', in early 1970 it went Top 10 in the USA, Top Five in the UK and was a #1 hit in Germany.

A self-titled album was issued that summer drawing inevitable comparisons to Mountain, Canned Heat and Grand Funk Railroad. Unfortunately, the band didn't have the same charisma or chops as those outfits, although the production is somewhat to blame. It's not a bad album, it's just not particularly memorable. There are some excellent fuzzed-up riffs on 'Crying Shame' but when it strays into boogie chillun blues territory on 'I'm On My Way' it all gets a bit predictable. The follow-up *Defrosted* is more of the same although with better production. Both discs feature bonus singles.

Richard Allen

GADSBY & SKOL
Gadsby & Skol
★★★★

BLUE MATTER CD/LP

Blown away from seeing Jimi Hendrix in concert twice, drummer Rick Skol put together this short-lived power trio, gigged some around the Toronto area, disbanded and had moved on by 1970. Twenty-five years later, guitarist Charles Gadsby unearths a rehearsal tape, some cajoling ensues, and the trio reconvenes to record their "album that never was" using the original as their reference point. The resulting long-player has just as much in common with *Welcome To Sky Valley* or *In Search Of* as its late '60s counterparts.

Opening with the succinct yet blistering 'Guitar Dog', a stratospheric Hendrix-like instrumental with a headful of mind-melting fuzz guitar, 'Fools Like You' and 'Getting Used To It' have all the underdog grit of heavy hitters like Truth And Janey and Eternity, and a storming stab at Blue Cheer's 'Just A Little Bit' is every bit as ferocious as the original, complete with that ultra-phased intro and a "last take of the day" vocal.

Louis Wiggett

THE GALILEO 7
Tear Your Minds Wide Open! (Expanded Edition)
★★★★

DAMAGED GOODS CD

The expanded edition of their 2017 album is a testament to the skill and attention to detail that The Galileo 7 bring to the psych-pop party. Thumping percussion, chiming guitars and flowing Hammond organ surge forward with an unstoppable energy that a far less seasoned combo would struggle to match.

Standout track 'Mystery Train' is sweeping and ethereal at times, with Allan Crockford's guitar sublime and effective, whilst the terrific 'Your Face Tomorrow' recalls The Creation's 'How Does It Feel To Feel'. The musicianship and vocal harmonies are astoundingly tight throughout with Viv Bonsels' catchy organ work a delight and Mole Lambert's drumming a brutal *tour de force* without any of these components overwhelming the balance of the sound. This new release has been beefed up with some interesting alternative versions and demos, but it's the original set that pulls you in to a joyous, swirling psych-pop cacophony.

Henry Hutton

GIL SCOTT-HERON & HIS AMNESIA EXPRESS
Legend In His Own Mind: Live In Bremen 1981
★★★★

MIG 2-CD

Never a man lost for words, Gil greets the crowd thus: "For those of you who do not know me, I am Miles Davis." From then on, he has the audience in the palm of his hand on this sterling performance of titles from his illustrious repertoire accompanied by his crack backing band The Amnesia Express.

It's obvious why Gil is acknowledged as one of the godfathers of rap, such is his supreme verbal fluency, his hard hitting wisdom and the unmistakably rich timbre of his voice as he intones his way through a set of memorably resonant songs, chief among these being 'Winter In America', 'Shut 'em Down', 'Washington DC' and the extended takes on 'B-Movie', 'The Bottle' and 'Johannesburg'. Both on record and live on stage, Gil was ever the combination of smart cookie and sophisticated musician.

This engaging live recording is a timely reminder of just how relevant his work remains.

Grahame Bent

ANDREW GOLD: THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF THE ALL
Greetings From Planet Love
★★★★

ESOTERIC CD/2-10"

You'd have to be a real sourpuss not to love this superbly executed pastiche psych album. Originally released in 1997 via Gold's own Quarkbrain imprint, it was for the most part multi-tracked by Gold himself, with the occasional help from pals such his partner in Wax, Graham Gouldman.

Over a shape-shifting 20 tracks, the LA soft-rocker pays tribute to artists that paved the way in the latter half of the '60s. The Beatles, The Byrds, The Beach Boys, The Doors, and Bob Dylan all get the soundalike treatment. This edition contains new sleeve art and a spoof band history tracing The Fraternal's trajectory from their folk roots to the recording of their unreleased summer-of-love album. Vinyl freaks will love the double 10-inch gatefold edition, it's one to nestle up alongside your Rutles and Dukes Of Stratosphear albums. Daft in places but huge fun and shot through with genuine affection.

Duncan Fletcher

JOHNNY'S UNCALLED FOUR
The Lost Album
★★★

WICK LP

Mastering engineer John Golden was transferring some tapes of his old band Johnny's Uncalled Four to digital in his facility in Ventura, California, when he was overheard by a customer, Gabriel Roth of Daptone Records, who quickly knocked out a deal to release a single. Now a complete set of 14 cuts of the band's long-lost recordings has been prepped for release.

The quality and feel of the playing is immediately evident on 'Movin' & Groovin'', which nails down some excellent, passionate, surf and twang guitar wrangling. The song choices are pretty standard for the era, with teen ballads, a cover of Buddy Holly's 'Maybe Baby' and some preppy teen pop. The playing, however, is astoundingly tight with snappy pizzicato guitar riffs and some excellent percussion work. Garage-foreshadowing rocker 'Please Stay' is a real highlight alongside their 'Wipeout'-style cover of 'House Of The Rising Sun'. And who doesn't love a pun-laden band name?

Henry Hutton

JON & ROBIN
The Singles
★★★★

SUNDAZED LP

It's the kind of story that seems made for the big screen: the schizophrenic gun-carrying millionaire's son with dreams of stardom, the teenager with a country & western background and real vocal talent. And, of course, the millionaire dad himself, a second life as record label honcho.

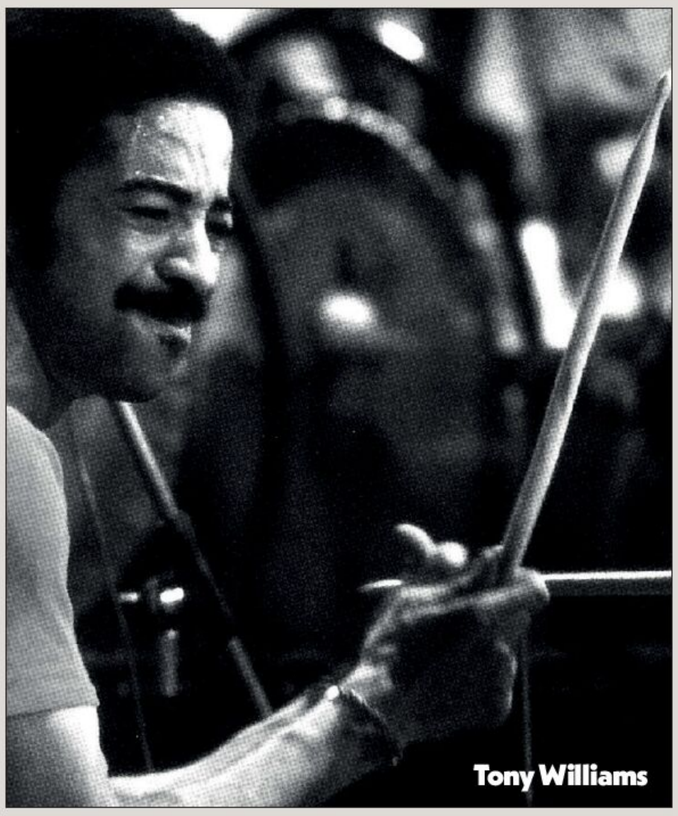
While all was not what it seemed to be – overambitious Jon, we're retroactively told, had no vocal prowess and had to be heavily doctored in the studio, while Robin (the second Robin chosen for this anxious venture) was actually named Javonne – this selection of songs recorded between 1967 and '69 is utterly delightful (despite some obsequious patriotism at the end). In places, Jon, Robin and the team behind them (comprising members of The Five Americans) are still tied to well-mannered early '60s romanticism ('Do It Again A Little Bit Slower'); elsewhere they're being tempted by the swagger of garage ('Love Me Baby').

Camilla Aisa

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

tune up

THOMAS PATTERSON gets hip to the hottest sounds in this month's jazz column



We're going exclamation mark crazy with our first four albums, kicking off with the jazz-fusion excellence of **THE TONY WILLIAMS LIFETIME**'s **Emergency!** (★★★★★, BE WITH 2-LP). Featuring Mahavishnu man John McLaughlin on guitar, this is jazz meets hippy freak-out music, propelled along by William's explosive drumming and ace keyboards from Larry Young that pitches the music well into Nice/Soft Machine territory; for starters, check out 'Via The Spectrum Road', which could have come straight out of the Canterbury scene. Sprawling and bold, this is one to light a jazz cigarette to and then file somewhere between Miles Davis and King Crimson.

Next, a selection from Craft, the label reissuing all manner of jazz albums of beautiful heavyweight vinyl under their 'Jazz Dispensary' and 'Acoustic Sounds' imprints. We'll give a quick shout out to **HECTOR LAVOE**'s **La Voz** (★★★★, CRAFT LP), originally released on Fania in 1975, as although it falls just slightly outside of our jazz remit, it's still a brilliant slice of salsa, and instead push on with drummer **IDRIS MUHAMMAD**'s debut **Black Rhythm Revolution!** (★★★, CRAFT LP). Recorded in '70 with guitarist Melvin Sparks and bassist Jimmy Lewis, the album is on a slightly less intense fusion tip than Tony Williams' offering, containing sultry versions of funky numbers like 'Express Yourself', 'Soulful Drums' and James Brown's 'Super Bad'. The best tracks, however, are Muhammad's originals 'Wander' and 'By The Red Sea', laidback, finger-snapping cuts of jazz club cool.

Bassist Leroy Vinnegar has an endless amount of credits, but 1958's **Leroy Walks!** (★★★★, CRAFT LP) is the only release from his group **THE LEROY VINNEGAR SEXTET**, a shame as this is

lovely, straight-ahead jazz, themed around songs with variations of the word "walk" in the title ('Walk On', ' Would You Like To Take A Walk', 'I'll Walk Alone', you get the picture). Vinnegar played as sidesman to Chet Baker, Stan Getz and Benny Carter, which should give you some idea of the breezy music within – cool, unfussed sounds, perfect for a Sunday morning listen.

Compare and contrast with another album from the same year, saxophonist and free-jazz pioneer **ORNETTE COLEMAN**'s '58 debut **Something Else!!!! The Music Of Ornette Coleman** (★★★★, CRAFT LP), an LP that not only sports a whopping four exclamation marks in its title, but gets four stars from us in the process. Although *relatively* sedate in comparison to Coleman's future work, with trumpeter Don Cherry and pianist Walter Norris helping to create a swinging bebop sound, it nonetheless marks the start of an incredible career and Coleman's wide ranging still sounds extraordinary today, especially on blues-rooted cuts 'The Blessing' and 'Jayne'. The shape of jazz to come a year before *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*.

A pair of reissues from San Francisco label Superior Viaduct now, with nary an exclamation mark in sight. **Black Woman** (★★★★, SUPERIOR VIADUCT LP) is the '70 debut album from guitarist **SONNY SHARROCK**. Although produced by easy-listening greased-up flute maestro Herbie Mann, this is wild, wild music, landing somewhere between spiritual-jazz, free-jazz, post-rock (years ahead of its time), and on solo cut 'Blind Willy', even primitive Americana. Sharrock's playing is intense, especially on the crescendoing eponymous opener, the true MVP here is Sharrock's wife Linda, who provides some incredible howling Yoko Ono meets Merry Clayton vocals on cuts like 'Portrait Of Linda In Three Colours, All Black'. Sonny Sharrock also crops on the '68 debut by flautist and saxophonist **BYARD LANCASTER**'s **It's Not Up To Us** (★★★★,

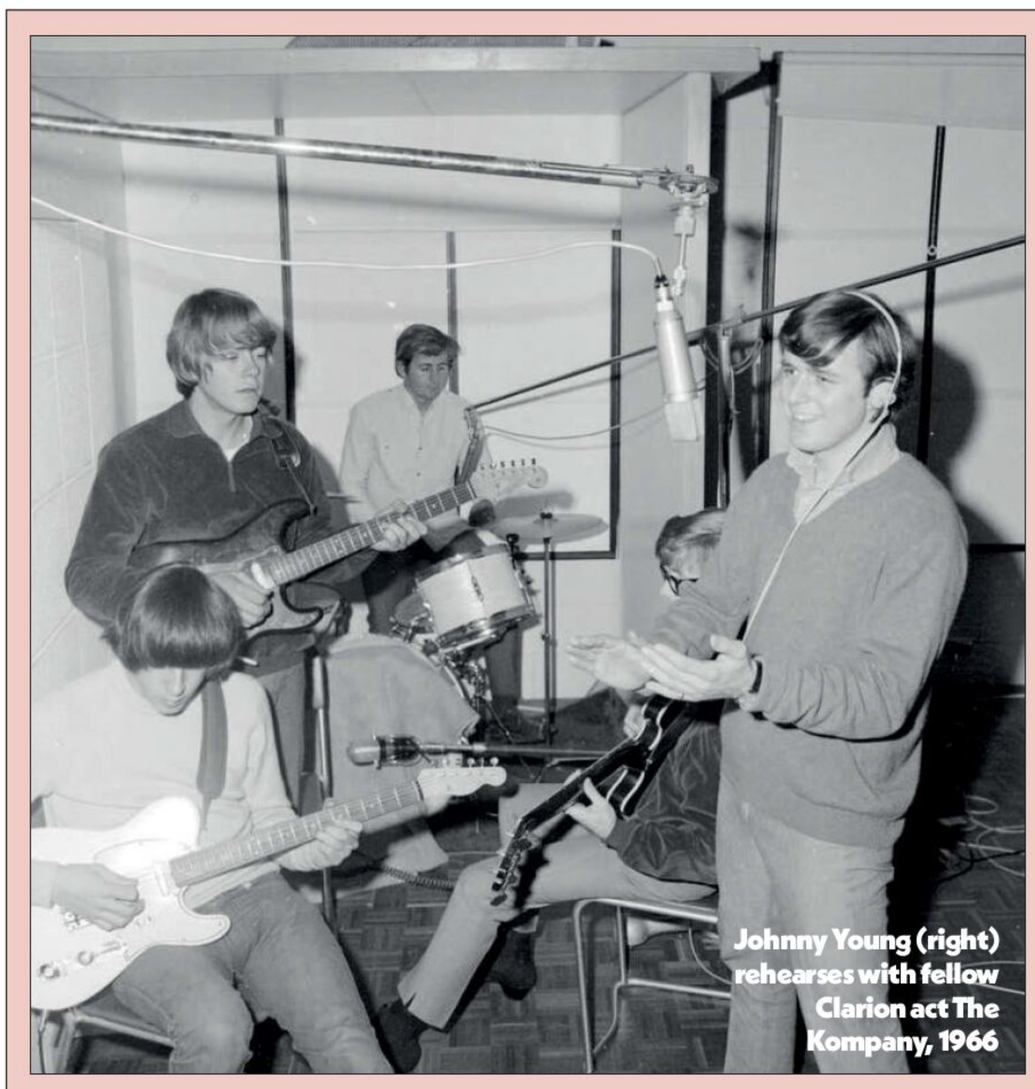
SUPERIOR VIADUCT LP). Initially a far more approachable album than *Black Woman*, thanks to plaintive, folky opener 'It's Not Up To Us', this soon heads into wild territory of its own, on tribalistic number 'John's Children', noise-squalling closer 'Satan', and a semi-sinister take on 'Over The Rainbow'. Semi-psychedelic and oddly beautiful.

Both are strolls in the park compared to **BAIKIDA CARROLL**'s **Orange Fish Tears** (★★★, SOUFFLE CONTINU CD), however. An American trumpeter who pitched up in Paris in the early '70s, this 1972 album is free-jazz in extremis, all clanking rhythms, squonking horns and atonal pianos, awash with what sound like slide whistles and wobble boards. Cuts like 'Forest Scorpion' and 'Porte D'Orléans' have a wild, atavistic energy, voodoo music transported straight into the heart of the Marais. Really this is more *musique concrète* than jazz, an often tough listen, but bracing at just the right moments.

To Britain for out last three. *Shindig!* covered legendary Brit sax man **TUBBY HAYES**' live album *The Complete Hopbine '69* a few years back, a document of a stunning night of music recorded at Wembley jazz club The Hopbine back in '69. We're sticking with the same man and same venue, but rewinding four years for **No Blues: The Complete Hopbine '65** (★★★★, JAZZ IN BRITAIN 2-CD), which captures Tubby and co covering such standards as 'Night And Day' and 'Have You Met Miss Jones?'. Long bootlegged, this the first full restoration of the night, and if the sound quality is (expectedly) a little thin in spots, the playing is full-blooded, especially on killer title track 'No Blues'. Kudos again to Jazz In Britain, bassist Ron Mathewson and liner notes writer Simon Spillett for coming up with the goods.

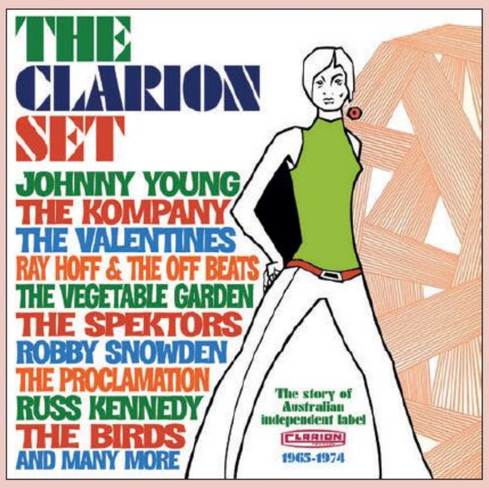
A blistering addition to the cannon of Britain-based Canadian trumpeter **KENNY WHEELER**, **Live '71: The Kenny Wheeler Big Band & Friends** (★★★★, BRITISH PROGRESSIVE JAZZ CD) contains four cuts of fab big band jazz performed live in London by the likes of Mike Osborne, Tony Oxley and the aforementioned Ron Mathewson. Recorded somewhere between Wheeler's brilliant '69 album with John Dankworth *Windmill Tilter,* and '73's *Song For Someone* (the title track of which appears here in a moody, cinematic form), this is where big band meets *avant-garde*, with just a touch of acoustic prog and siren-like acid-folk for good measure. Beautifully mastered by British Progressive Jazz, this is a must for the Brit jazz fans in the house.

Finally, from 1976 comes **Joy** (★★★★, CADILLAC CD/LP) by **JOY**, a London-based quintet working very much in the mould of Brotherhood Of Breath and Harry Beckett's *Joy Unlimited*. This is relaxed, post-bop of the highest order, lovingly restored with original sleeve notes directing listeners to send any enquiries about the band to an address in Putney that appears now to be an off-licence. Times change, but the cracking music within remains constant.



Johnny Young (right) rehearses with fellow Clarion act The Kompany, 1966

Heaven And Perth



VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Clarion Set: The Story Of Australian Independent Label Clarion Records 1965-1974

★★★★

GRAPEFRUIT 3-CD

Based in the Western Australian city of Perth, teenager Martin Clarke built his own studio, basing the dimensions on Capitol Studios in Hollywood. From humble beginnings Clarke recorded all the local talent at his disposal, most notably a pre-AC/DC Bon Scott. *The Clarion Set* assembles the pick of the label's roster across three CDs, covering the period 1965 to '74. There's a variety of styles on show, proving that distance didn't hamper the Aussies from tuning into the latest sounds blowing in from Swinging London and the US. Admittedly, they may have been a couple of years out of step but that's forgiveable.

Two of the most interesting acts to file through the studio doors were Bon Scott's Valentines and, somewhat confusingly, The Birds. Both acts feature heavily, including pre-Valentines band The Spektors, who offer a snarling cover of perennial garage-rock favourite 'Gloria'. You'll be familiar with The Valentines' punchy cover of The Small Faces' 'I Can't Dance With You' but proto-powerpop classic 'Love Makes Sweet Music' is a genuine contender. Meanwhile, The Birds were a couple of ex-pats who appropriated the name of Ronnie Wood's by now defunct band, then covered two of their best-known tracks. The ruse may still confuse but they were a completely different band and went onto to record decent Humble Pie-inspired rocker 'Dust In My Pants' and a cheery knees-up version of The Small Faces' 'Rene'.

It's interesting to see how each featured act developed across the years, absorbing the changing sounds of the day as beat and R&B transitioned into folk-rock, psychedelia, sunshine-pop and eventually jazzy progressive rock. *Sgt Pepper*'s arrival to Aussie shores clearly impacted on 'Every Christian Lion Hearted Man Will Show You' by Johnny Young (think Michael Lloyd's The Smoke). Hairy Badfinger wannabes Chalice arrived from the UK in the early '70s to cut a handful of killer powerpop for Clarion before Clarke wound the label down and moved to England. Sadly, the producer died from a heart attack in March 2006, but this entertaining set is a fitting tribute to one man's "anything goes" vision.

Paul Ritchie

THE KINKS
Live On Beat Club

★★

CANTARE CD

Whether you're a fan of these YouTube to CD rips or not, there's no arguing that it's a convenient way to listen to an entire TV show or radio broadcast without the ads and playlist-queuing that some online listening requires these days.

Live On Beat Club presents The Kinks' 12th April 1972 performance on the German TV institution – spoken intros, false starts, multiple takes and all. It's a typically schizophrenic set that leans heavily on the previous November's *Muswell Hillbillies* while throwing in a triptych of hit singles and a pair of more obscure album tracks for good measure. What's baffling is that while it's happy to present six takes of 'Skin And Bone' it omits two songs performed that day, both of which appear on previous variations of this release. Cover art is virtually non-existent, and sound quality is fair but doesn't stand up to scrutiny, simply sending the listener back to the studio albums and *BBC Sessions* set.

Andy Morten

KRISTYL
Kristyl

★★★

GUERSSEN LP

One of the US private pressings that has attained "relic" status over the years, Kristyl's sole album has been reissued legitimately and otherwise, but this most recent edition was taken from the freshly discovered master tape.

Recorded and released privately by a high school band from Louisville, Kentucky, everything about the album exudes an aura of mystery particularly attractive to lovers of obscure psych. As a result, originals sell for close to $2,000. But is it any good? Guitarist Sonny de Vore is a big part of the appeal of the record, his trippy electric guitar work is complex yet never predictable and, paired with the Christian-themed lyrics penned in collaboration with rhythm guitarist Bob Terrell, the overall effect is that of a homespun epic. 'Deceptions Of The Mind' and 'The Valley Of Life' come across like psychedelic sermons dripping with acid guitar whilst the bluesy 'Woman' and 'Morning Glory' are more down to earth.

Richard Allen

LITTLE RICHARD
The Complete Atlantic & Reprise Singles

★★★★★

REAL GONE MUSIC LP

This wild ride of a set brings together the four self-produced tracks Richard recorded for the Atlantic label in 1962, as well as his run of five singles for Reprise beginning with '70's 'Freedom Blues' and including his magnificent romp through 'I Saw Her Standing There'.

The Atlantic singles are somewhat schizoid. The B-sides are a slightly re-hinged version of the Richard you know and love, but the A-sides are directly analogous to Ray Charles in his 'I Can't Stop Loving You' period; syrupy chorales and saccharine arrangements cannot hide the magnificence of *that voice*. The Reprise singles are more of a treat. Richard has thrown off the preacher's garb and he would like you to know that he is *back*. It's not the almost-demonic madman of 'Keep a-Knockin'' but it's massive. Your toes will not tap.; they will kick the wall. Even the final instrumental B-side 'Nuki Suki' is not a throwaway. You'll play it again.

Mike Fornatale

MANDY MORTON & SPRIGUNS
Magic Lady

★★★★

GUERSSEN LP

Nineteen-seventy-eight was late in the day for acid-folk, but slightly too early for the young psychedelic goths who might've embraced *Magic Lady* just a few years later.

Self-released after Spriguns' two Decca LPs, *Magic Lady* is rich in themes of witchcraft, madness and the supernatural, from the brilliantly spooky 'According To Matthew', with its tense violin solo, to the harder rocking 'The Lady' and standout track 'Witchfinder', laden with harpsichord, fuzz guitars, and a tale of revenge from beyond the grave. The gorgeous title track, dedicated to the recently deceased Sandy Denny, is lyrically spare, as though the loss was still too raw to express in more than a few words, and 'Ghost Of A Song' also betrays a strong Denny influence. Though it occasionally trips melodically towards the middle of the road, *Magic Lady* never turns to mush, and sounds now like the last great folk-rock album of the '70s.

Ben Graham

MIGHTY BABY
Mighty Baby

★★★★

BIG BEAT LP

The morphing of mod legends The Action into a British equivalent of The Grateful Dead, eventually discovering the Sufi faith, remains an intriguing story. It's a rewarding musical rediscovery too, as evident on this reissue of Mighty Baby's self-titled debut LP.

Recorded halfway into their overall life span in early 1969, it's a product if it's time, with a feel akin to the Pretties' *SF Sorrow* and Small Faces' *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*, yet opening cut 'Egyptian Tomb' sets out their stall as something quite unique and sometimes deeply hypnotic. Driven by Roger Powell's distinctive drumming and the multi-

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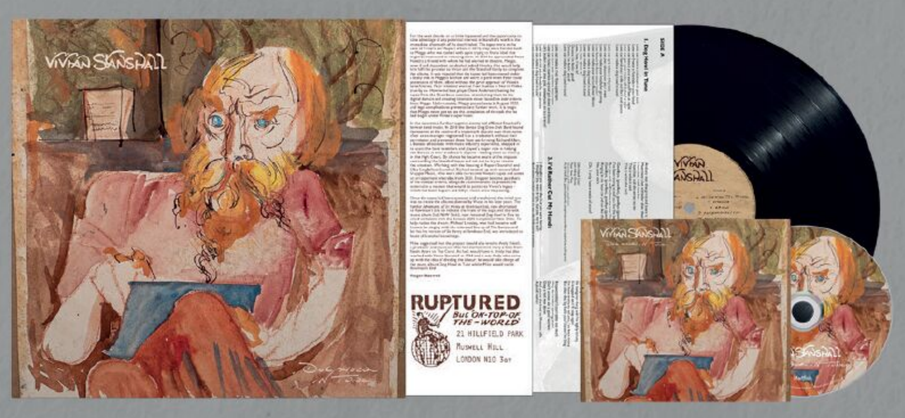
Madfish. posthumously releases

VIVIAN STANSHALL

of BONZO DOG DOO DAH BAND fame,

'Dog Howl in Tune' and 'Rawlinson's End' - July 14



The long awaited final and previously unreleased rock album by Vivian Stanshall.

Musicians include Jack Bruce (Cream), Ollie Halsall (Patto), Susie Honeyman (The Mekons), Neil Innes and Rodney Slater (The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band), Mike Kellie (Spooky Tooth) and others.

Dog Howl in Tune is available on on CD and LP

The final part of Vivian Stanshall's surreal comic masterpiece

Using tapes from Vivian's archive, Stanshall expert and performance artist Michael Livesley put together the release that Vivian had intended. This final album is a double LP containing some of Vivian's finest work.

Rawlinson's End is available on CD and 2LP

Madfish. For more information on these titles, and many more visit www.madfishmusic.com

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instrumental textures provided by keyboardist Ian Whiteman, the album suggests what a special band Mighty Baby was. The musical empathy with each other fully intact, the showboating tendencies of the era are virtually absent here on a set of eight songs that hints strongly at the inner space and spirituality that would propel them from here on.

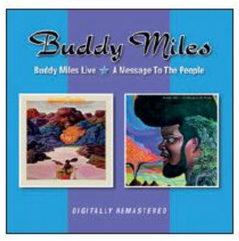
Ben Phillipson

BUDDY MILES

Buddy Miles Live / A Message To The People

★★★★

BGO 2-CD



Recorded in Seattle, Santa Monica and Bakersfield in July 1971, *Buddy Miles Live* gets its first ever release on CD as part of this powerhouse double disc edition. As live albums go, this one comprehensively captures the knockout punch of the drummer's big-hearted soul-driven sound. Accompanied by an outstanding assembly of musicians as frontman and bandleader Miles essentially brings to life what Hendrix used to refer to as "electric church music". Particular highlights here include the epic reworking of Neil Young's 'Down By The River', the groove-driven riot of 'Wrap It Up' and the climactic frenzy of 'Them Changes' and 'We Got To Live Together'.

Making up Disc Two is Miles' contemporaneous studio album *A Message To The People,* which besides providing a continuity of sound and personnel, includes memorable revisitations of Gregg Allman's 'Don't Keep Me Wondering', 'Midnight Rider' and Otis Redding's 'Wholesale Love'.

Grahame Bent

NEURONIUM

The Harvest Years

★★★★

MIG CD

Belgian-born synth and keyboard wiz Michael Huygen is the driving force behind the mesmerising soundscapes of little-known electronic combo Neuronium.

Initially starting out as a psych-based quintet, they soon dwindled to a trio as the influence of Tangerine Dream, Klaus Schulze and Popul Vuh started to take hold. Signing for Harvest Records in 1977, Huygen and Spaniards Albert Giminez (guitar) and Carlos Guirao (guitar, synth) began to create their own brand of cosmic-electronica that could comfortably sit beside that of their heroes. This latest Harvest-era reissue contains their first two releases: debut *Quasar 2C361* and the darker *Vuelo Quimico,* the latter dedicated to the poetry of Edgar Allen Poe and featuring Nico's haunting vocals on the title track. With these newly-restored editions overseen by Huygens himself, this is a beguiling blend of German kosmische and early Floyd – uncanny electronica to be savoured.

Sarah Gregory

ÖBACKA SÅGVÄRCK

Håru Nansin Varit Död

★★★★★

SUBLIMINAL SOUNDS LP

Öbacka Sågvärck's sound was often compared to an industrial din emanating from the sawmill on the edge of town, so taking its name seemed an unquestionable decision for these like-minded youth club dwellers with a shared passion for new hard-rock and prog sounds.

This succinct set of previously unreleased live and studio recordings has been lovingly reconstructed from deteriorating cassette tape with Grail-like endeavour and is a landmark discovery in the sphere of Swedish hard-rock. If anything, the mangled phase-shifting and background wow and flutter leftover from the meticulous restoration adds an air of minacity some bands spend hours of studio time striving to achieve. The energy and ideas summoned is mind-boggling, with super solid and inventive riffs akin to compatriots November, skin-busting syncopated grooves of Bill Ward/John Bonham proportions, and soul-deep vocals with an occasional agonising scream. The eye-popping 12-page booklet crammed with photos and the band's history isn't shabby either.

Louis Wiggett

PENNY ARKADE

Not The Freeze

★★★★

SUNDAZED CD/2-LP

Recorded in 1967 but unreleased till 2004, Penny Arkade's sole album was produced by Mike Nesmith and centred around singer-songwriters Chris Ducey and Craig Smith, who'd met when starring in unbroadcast *Monkees*-style TV show *The Happeners,* about a fictional Greenwich Village folk duo. Smith would later weird out as Maitreya Kali, the full story told in *Swim Through The Darkness* by Mike Stax, who also provides this set's informative sleeve notes.

Most of *Not The Freeze* would sit happily on a Monkees album, albeit as quirky LP tracks rather than commercial singles. The 12-minute title track is the exception, a collaged cousin to The Pretty Things' 'Defecting Grey', but the default mode is psychedelic folk-rock with occasional garage crunchiness. Fourteen bonus tracks, previously only available on CD, include the bizarrely catchy raga-rock of 'Woodstock Fireplace', Smith's spacey 'Split Decision' and Ducey's psych belter 'No Rhyme Or Reason', plus alternate takes.

Ben Graham

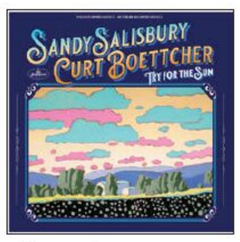
SANDY SALISBURY & CURT BOETTCHER

Try For The Sun

★★★★

SUNDAZED CD/LP

Home demos from Sandy and Curt plus unreleased Millenium tracks? Yes, please. Thrown together by happenstance in LA shortly after Curt's first big success as producer of



'Along Comes Mary', Sandy was recruited into Boettcher's bands The Ballroom and Millenium, both of which folded before leaving much of a mark.

Even while the groups were active, Sandy hoped that someone/anyone would record his songs. What he didn't know for many years was that Curt liked them so much he was holding them back for the band or Sandy to score a hit rather than someone else. Alas, might-have-beens never happened, something Salisbury appears remarkably phlegmatic about. Most of these songs have never been heard, with only a couple having been subsequently released in studio versions, notably the driving 'Spell On Me'. Curt's 'Oops' is elder sibling of The Rutles' 'Ouch'. These unpolished sunshine-pop gems will appeal to any fan of their makers' other work.

Vic Templar

SANDIE SHAW

On Radio & TV 1965-1970

★★★★

1960S LP

What's not to like about a selection of vintage radio and TV recordings from the barefoot Dagenham siren?

Side One comprises principally of mid-60s BBC recordings from *Top Gear* and *Saturday Club* that feature the early Chris Andrews-penned material ('Girl Don't Come', 'Long Live Love' *et al*) along with covers of Ketty Lester's 'Love Letters' and The Lovin' Spoonful's 'Coconut Grove'. Side Two boasts a version of 'Yesterday Man' from the 1967 Bratislava International Festival Of Pop Music and a '65 *Shindig!* performance of 'Always Something There To Remind Me' . However, the jewels in the crown are the tracks from the BBC's *The Sandie Shaw Supplement* originally aired in September '68. Here Sandie can be heard grooving her way through snappy and stylish arrangements of everything from 'Route 66', 'Do You Know The Way To San Jose' and 'Trains And Boats And Planes' to a Fabs medley of 'Day Tripper' and 'Ticket To Ride'.

Grahame Bent

STACKRIDGE

The Man In The Bowler Hat

★★★★

ESOTERIC 2-CD

Originally released in 1974, the Bristolian sextet's third album proved to be their most successful, marrying as it did their quirky, quintessential Englishness to a stronger set of songs than those on earlier outings.

'Fundamentally Yours' evokes a whimsically poppy McCartney, an impression reinforced by George Martin's production and orchestration, and 'Pinafore Days' beams in nostalgic longing from some between the wars end of the pier show. With its choir boy vocal and hymnal arrangement, the lush 'To The Sun And The Moon' is like a prog-lit vespers, and is the album's standout. Despite a slackening in the second half – 'The Galloping Gauco' is Freddie Phillips without the *Camberwick Green* gang, and 'The Indifferent Hedgehog' might lead to an accidental overdose of fey – *The Man In The Bowler Hat* deserved its original success, and is ripe for reappraisal now. The bonus disc contains a *BBC In Concert* appearance and a Bob Harris session, both from '73.

Peter Gallagher

VIVIAN STANSHALL

Dog Howl In Tune
Rawlinson's End

BOTH ★★★★

BOTH MADFISH CD/LP

Vivian Stanshall departed this earthly realm in 1995, so it's extraordinary that here come two "new" albums from the Bonzo Dog genius/madman.

Dog Howl In Tune, intended to be Viv's rock album follow-up to 1981 LP *Teddy Boys Don't Knit*. Comprising 11 tracks culled from a selection of 60 or so recordings in the vaults, it runs the gamut from blues-rock to doo-wop, all coursing with Stanshall's trademark eccentric wit, backed by musicians including Jack Bruce, and Neil Innes and Rodney Slater from the Bonzos. It's a wonderfully daft and, at times, surprisingly moving collection (especially on closer 'Boy In Darkness'). The other offering is a final volume in the delightful *Sir Henry At Rawlinson's End* saga, again pieced together from tapes in his archives. Fans will know what they're in for – aristocratic insanity and evocative characters like Old Scrotum the wrinkled retainer. Look out, there are monsters coming.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Mr Bongo Record Club 6

★★★★

MR BONGO 2-LP

This eclectic series continues to delight with another slew of unsung treasures. Each set digs deep, featuring an eclectic blend of funk, soul, jazz, gospel, Latin, bossa nova and disco from literally all corners of the world, both new and old. It's like a perfect mix tape containing essential fodder for all discerning deejays.

Where else are you going to hear gospel/disco perfection in the shape of New York Community Choir's 1978 'I'll Keep My Light In My Window', kinky Japanese Latin-esque R&B from Chiemi Eri, and Caribbean feel-good joy by Trinidad & Tobago duo Mave & Dave? There's a heavy emphasis on Brazilian grooves (Side Three is almost exclusively a feast of bossa-inspired bounty) and vintage rare soul licensed from the Numero Group stable. Why not let Mr Bongo do the heavy lifting whilst you impress your mates with these new discoveries that are sure to lighten up inquisitive dancefloors?

Paul Ritchie

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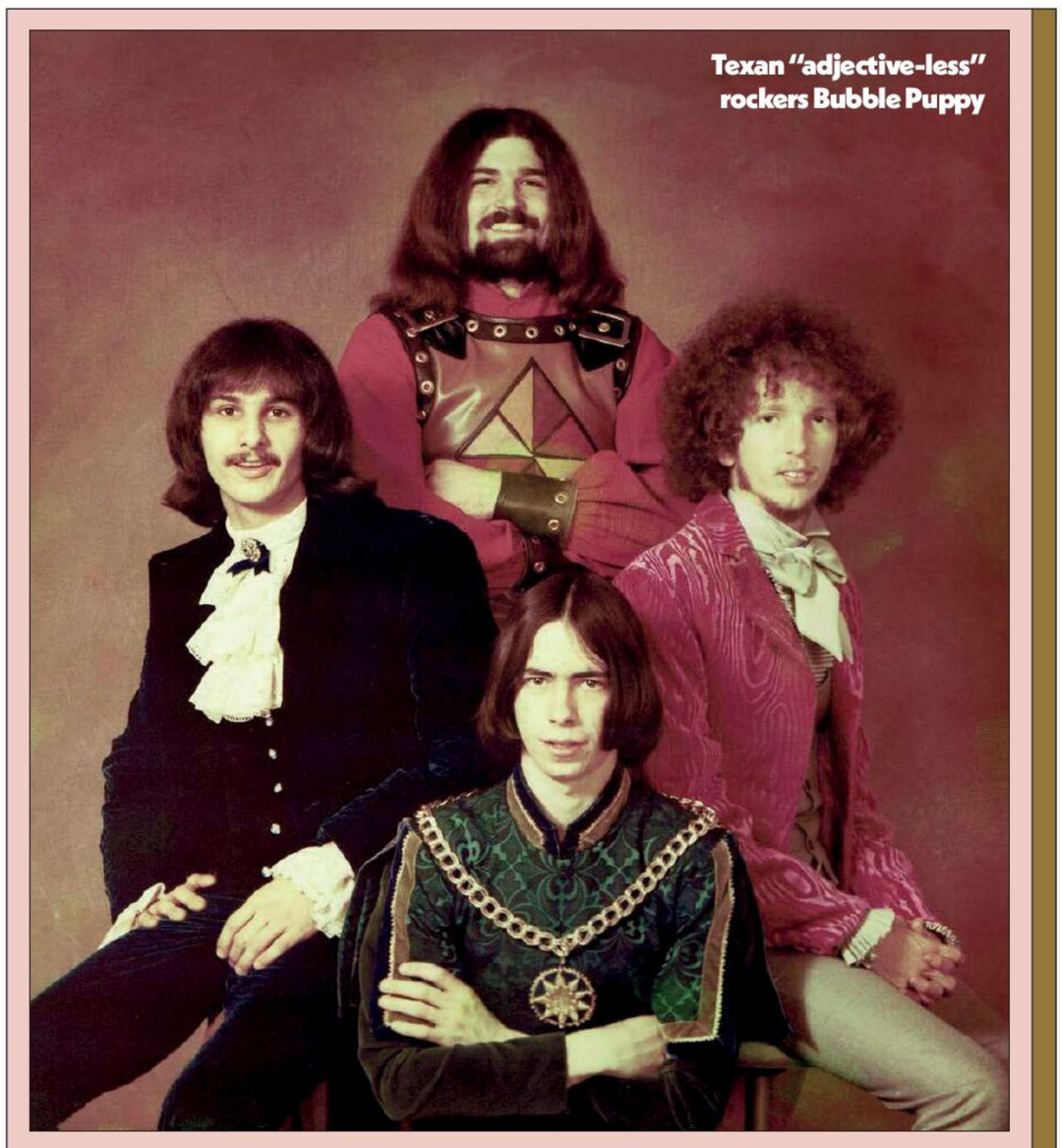


Hard Times

VARIOUS ARTISTS
We're An American Band: A Journey Through The USA Hard Rock Scene 1967-1973
★★★★

GRAPEFRUIT 3-CD BOX SET

Another month, another juicy Grapefruit themed box set, with early Headbanging Hymns Of The Republic getting the 60-plus track, 3-CD clamshell treatment. As ever, there's the usual assortment of pioneers, future stars, bandwagon jumpers and stars that fame forgot – some justly.

Based on the evidence here, the twin births of hard-rock and proto-metal were a laborious process. Vanilla Fudge's shtick was to take a hit of the day and pour on the Pb until it was positively leaden; 'Ticket To Ride' is the victim here. Iron Butterfly keep things swampy with their eponymous 'Theme', but it is marred by some gratuitous noodling, and by the time the listener endures Blue Cheer's shouty hit reading of 'Summertime Blues', despair has surely claimed them. Thankfully things pick up with 'The Ostrich', Steppenwolf's sojourn into jaunty metal (a neglected genre) while The Savage Resurrection outweird them with their blend of sludgy psych and vocals to Morris dance to.

The stars of tomorrow include ZZ Top, The Stalk-Forrest Group *and* Blue Öyster Cult, future Cheap Tricksters Rick Nielsen and Tom Peterssen, and Todd Rundgren, both in Nazz and solo *and* as producer of Grand Funk's title track. The familiar faces quota is buoyed by Alice Cooper, The MC5, The Stooges, Spirit, Love and that time Muddy Waters went heavy.

As with many a Grapefruit box, joy is to be had in rediscovering those that slipped through the fingers of success. Step forward Bubble Puppy's 'Hot Smoke And Sasafrass' *(sic)* (more adjectiveless-rock rather than hard-rock) and the poppiest track in the box, 'Good Morning Day' by Omnibus, which, if it ditched the Hammond, wouldn't have sounded out of place in 1977; 'Time Seller' by Stack, whose Bill Shepperd is surely one of rock's great lost voices; The Damnation Of Adam Blessing's 'Death Of A Virgin', a groovy slice of acid melodrama; and Dust, featuring the future Marky Ramone and seeing off all challengers as America's answer to Black Sabbath.

Despite the slow start and the inevitable forgettables (Morgen, Kim Fowley, Gold, Cold Sun), *We're An American Band is* a rock-solid anthology.

Peter Gallagher

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Lounge Psychédélique
★★★★

TWO PIERS CD/2-LP

Subtitled *(The Best of Lounge & Exotica 1954-2022)*, *Lounge Psychédélique* is the third *Psychédélique* comp following on from *Pop Psychédélique* and *Garage Psychédélique*, and what a whopper it is, 26 or 29 cuts (depending on whether you pick up the CD or LP) of groovy lounge music from the greats of the genre including Les Baxter, Cal Tjader, Arthur Lyman, Don Sebesky and Keith Mansfield, plus a few selections from contemporary artists who play in the same honied waters, such as Los Bitchos, The Bongolian and Pizzicato Five.

Many of the tracks are perhaps a touch ubiquitous (Denny's 'The Enchanted Isle', Lyman's 'Quiet Village', Sebesky's 'Guru-Vin' and Mansfield's 'Morning Broadway' have propped up many a lounge comp in the past), but they do nicely contrast with lesser heard cuts such as Ixtahuele's 'Mareld 2021' and Michael Giacchino & Nouvelle Modernica Orchestra's 'Sidereal Day: 3'. Ultimately, any album that contains numbers from Leonard Nimoy, Lalo Schifrin and Dave Pike deserves a mai-tai and lei in appreciation.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Schnitzelbeat Volume 3: Ready For Take Off
★★★★★

DIGATONE/TRASH ROCK ARCHIVES LP

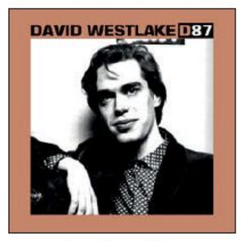
The quality of the *Schnitzelbeat* album series is always first class, with the in-depth research and meticulous attention to detail quite breath-taking. Having the texts printed in German and English is a welcome bonus. *Volume 3* continues the excavation of celebrated and genuinely obscure 1967-73 Austrian sounds.

Rare aural treasures include 'Garbage Man', a wild, pounding psych-punker from an unissued '67 acetate by Novak's Kapelle, and Expiration's excellent '68 topside 'It Wasn't Right', which adds heavy Cream to the group's reflective beat-psych cool. Tracks by Maybe Hair, Seals and Cop Stigh are all war inspired, while The Charles Ryders Corporation successfully engulf us in their hallucinogenic, Hendrix-coated 'White Flames'. Jack Grunsky's 'Sally McGregor' offers a folk/pop breather but with the Hush's 'Giny' it's back to more mind-blowing tactics. Big shout out for Beatniks, Sabres, Generation 2000 and Rocky F Holicke's '73 title track, on which the compelling mix of percussive groove, sound effects and queasy voiceover is magically unsettling.

Lenny Helsing

DAVID WESTLAKE
D87
★★★★

OPTIC NERVE CD/LP



Originally released as *Westlake,* a six-song mini-LP on Creation in 1987, David Westlake's solo debut is expanded and renamed to cunningly reference the *C86* compilation that gave his band The Servants their highest profile appearance.

If not for the lack of a full-time rhythm section, *Westlake* would've been The Servants' debut instead, but as it was Westlake and a young Luke Haines on lead guitar are helped out by The Triffids' rhythm section on none-more-indie cuts like 'The Word About Town' (which recalls the Bunnymen's 'Read It In Books'), crooned ballad 'Everlasting', and 'Talk Like That', on which Haines proves he's definitely heard *Marquee Moon.* Prior to the album, Westlake recorded a Janice Long session backed by members of The Go-Betweens and drummer John Wills (later of Loop), included here alongside demos of two unreleased songs. If you love literate, civilised, grammar school rock 'n' roll, take *D87* to your heart.

Ben Graham

TUCKER ZIMMERMAN
Over Here In Europe
★★★★★

BIG POTATO CD/LP

A Native Californian who resettled in rural Belgium, Tucker Zimmerman recorded his outstanding third album for tiny French label Spalax in 1974.

Other than the title song, its lyrical themes focus less on life in Europe than back in the United States. Zimmerman sings of the decline of the railways as a metaphor for modernisation and of mountain retreats from urban strife. The music is mostly acoustic, the vocals delivered in a tremulous tone reminiscent of Gordon Lightfoot. What sets it apart is the pioneering use of synthesisers, employed to great effect on the opening waltz 'Good Old Days', a smart reflection on the way time distorts memory, and 'Oregon', a cinematic tale of pioneer settlement. David Bowie and Mick Ronson were both fans. Listen and you will be too.

Clive Webb

wintergarden

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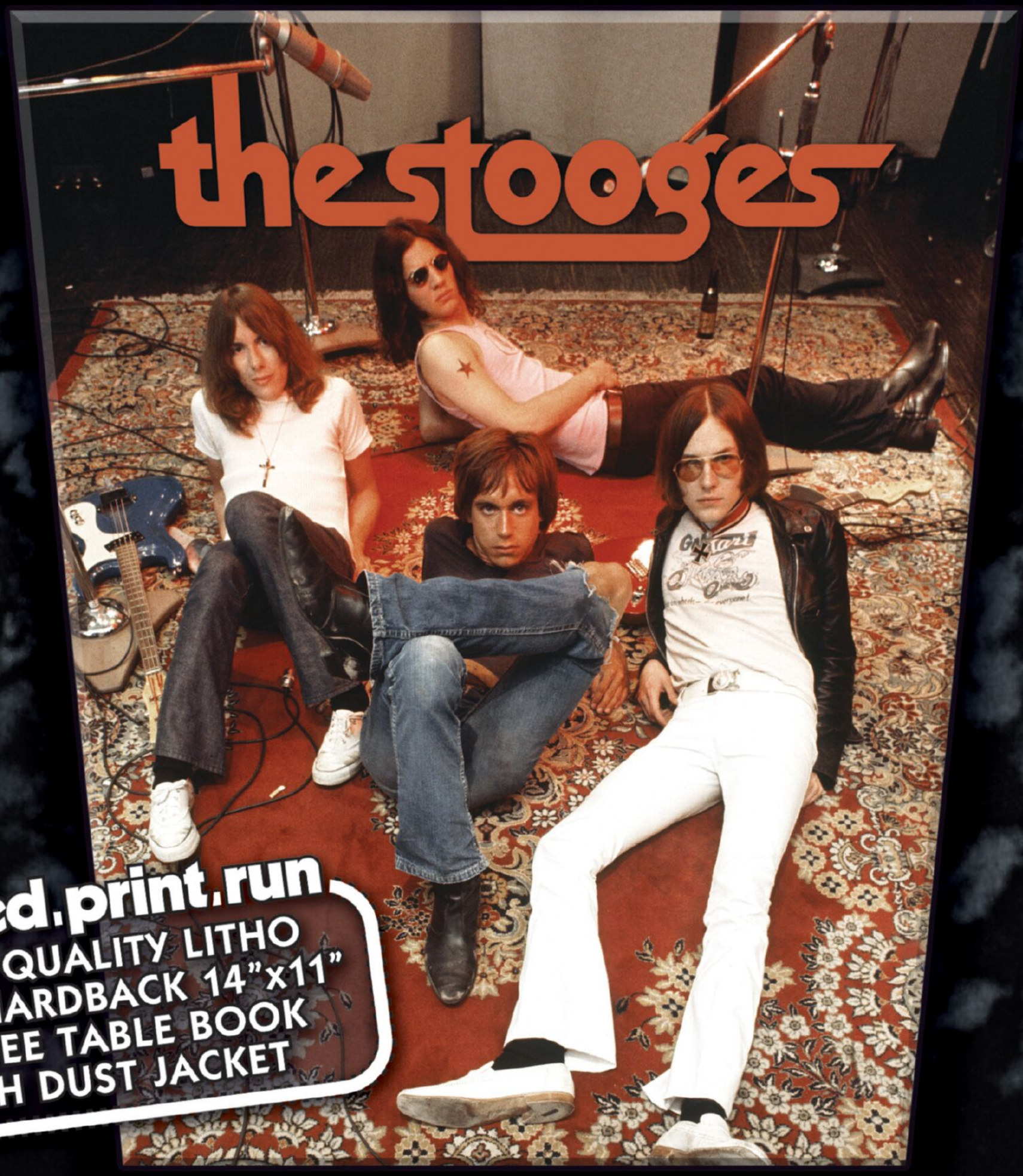

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Per Nilsen and Carlton P. Sandercock

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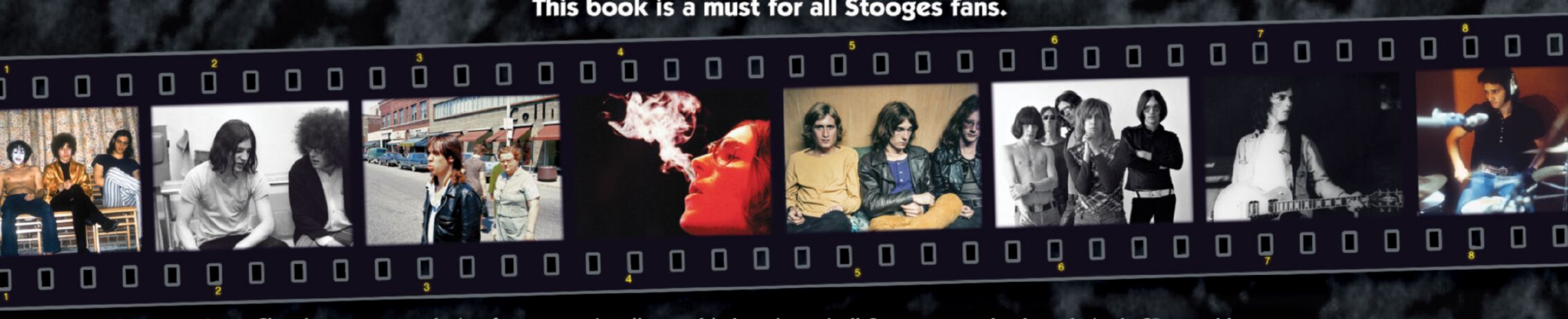

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A multitude of new music

Reflected Glory

THE CORAL
Sea Of Mirrors
★★★★★★
Holy Joe's Coral Island Medicine Show
★★★★

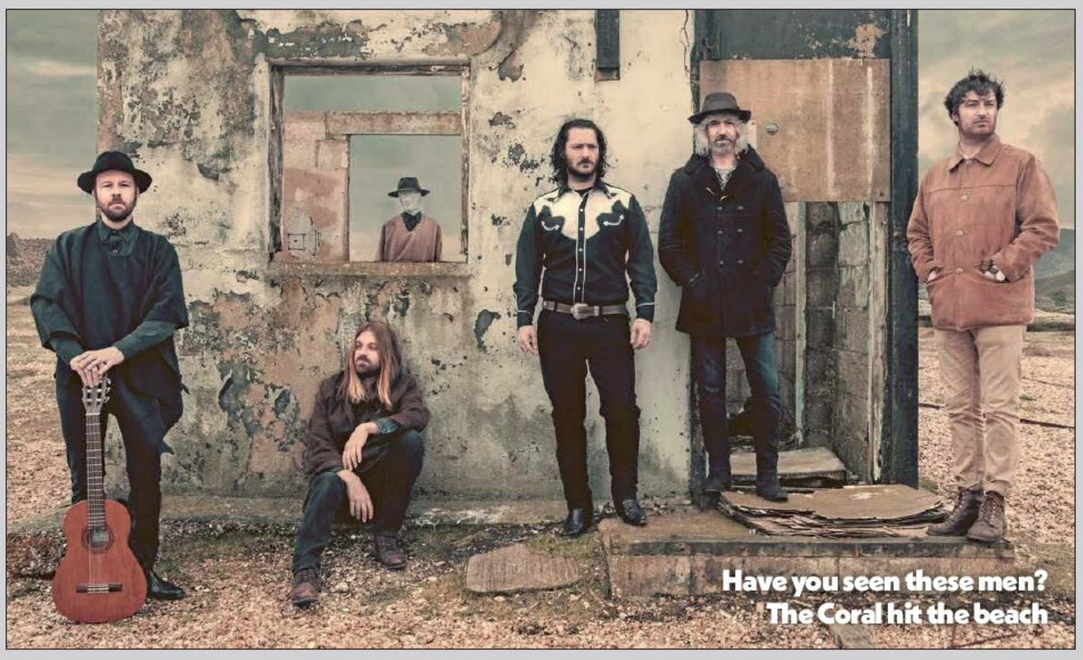
RUN ON/MODERN SKY UK LPS

Unbelievably entering their third decade, The Coral are riding a late career creative high. Following 2021's ace double set *Welcome To Coral Island*, they've decided to go big again, releasing two albums simultaneously.

"Imaginary Soundtrack album" *Sea Of Mirrors* may be the lushest they've ever sounded. 'Cycles Of The Seasons' is a glorious, string-laden canter that would sit snugly on a late '60s Bobbie Gentry album. 'Faraway Worlds' is superb spacey canyon-rock, complete with a Sagittarius-like acapella breakdown. 'That's Where She Belongs' is prime RCA studios folk-pop while 'Dream River' combines vibes, strings and bossa to great effect. Elsewhere there's much Hazlewood/Morricone-inflected ghost-riding of The Wirral Frontier. They sign off on the expansive 'Oceans Apart', with a moody spoken part from head *Peaky Blinder* Cillian Murphy. Narration is becoming a Coral trademark, which continues on companion vinyl-only release *Holy Joe's Coral Island Medicine Show*, on which John Simm intones 'Drifter's Prayer' (Love's Johnny Echols gets in on the act too on some of the promotional material).

Bonus albums are usually a mixed blessing. For every *Gift From A Flower To A Garden* there's something like *Grape Jam*. You'd assume that *Holy Joe's...* would be full of daft out-takes and interminable jams, but it's strong in its own right, a sparser but equally spooked-out cousin to *Sea Of Mirrors*. Presented as a rambling *Twin Peaks*-like pirate radio broadcast, James and Ian Skelly's grandad The Great Muriarty reprises his role as MC from Coral Island, providing droll commentary between tracks ("It's line-dancing night at the caravan site, and Rita is having a bad one.") 'The Sinner' is a fantastic Lee Hazlewood shimmy, the aching 'Never Be In Love Like That Again' is short, sweet and disarmingly straight-forward for a band obsessed with haunted piers and Lovecraftian weirdness. 'Long Drive To The City' is a gorgeous pedal steel-goosed travelogue, but they're back on familiar ground with the noir-skiffle murder ballad of 'Down By The Riverside' and the mournful closing strum of 'The Coral Island Killer' (which, coincidentally or not, bears distinct echoes of The Pretty Things' 'Loneliest Person'). Long may they voyage.

Martin Ruddock


Have you seen these men? The Coral hit the beach

THE ARROGANTS
Brainwash
★★

DIRTY WATER LP

Second album from French combo The Arrogants. Pete Townsend is apparently a big fan, and indeed the group has just enjoyed the prestige of opening for The Who in Paris. PT also suggests the group's newest long-player successfully captures the sound of '60s mod and R&B. Did he hear the same album that we did?

While admittedly being quite fierce, and with a certain attitude of defiance about it, *Brainwash* comes across as something of a hotch-potch, jumbled set of ideas, covering ground in the indie-mod, and rock-heavy garage departments, plus the odd beat-up blues and attempt at psychedelic punk. Some pretty decent sound elements can still be found – the fuzz guitar tone, for example, being sharp and waspish – although judicious deployment may have ultimately proved more powerful. The vocals sound flat and grating at times, rendering them tiresome to listen to. Some songs tend towards being too derivative and, in many cases, lack sufficient melodic focus, rendering them difficult to keep the listener's attention.

Lenny Helsing

DEVENDRA BANHART
Flying Wig
★★★★

MEXICAN SUMMER CD/LP

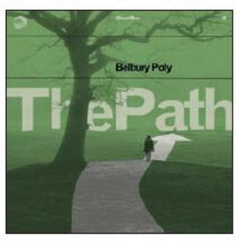
Devendra Banhart has spent 20-something years at the forefront of the freak-folk movement, championing an exquisite, cerebral brand of singer-songwriting. But with the stresses of the world closing in, he decided to turn the tables, exploring brand-new musical terrain with the help of label-mate and close pal Cate Le Bon.

Having experienced a period of complete despondency, Banhart dispatched himself to the wilds of Topanga Canyon, where he and Cate began to channel his feelings of hopelessness into the music. Inspired by Buddhist poet and writer Kobayashi Issa, *Flying Wig* sees Banhart seeking to transform his negative world into a positive one. While retaining his customary otherworldly tone, this new set of songs is noticeably darker – the rumble of '80s synth and electronic experimentation used to great effect to enhance the underlying emotional mood. Le Bon's contribution as both producer and multi-instrumentalist is inspired, enabling Banhart's sense of adventure and musical exploration.

Sarah Gregory

BELBURY POLY
The Path
★★★★

GHOST BOX CD/LP



Jim Jupp throws the Belbury Poly campus open to some impressive guest lecturers on their seventh album, with narration by Justin Hopper and musicians Christopher Budd on guitar and bass, Max Saidi on drums and Jesse Chandler (Midlake, Mercury Rev, Pneumatic Tubes) on woodwind and keys.

Hopper sets the scene with the ominous 'Coordinates', like the opening of some '70s supernatural eco-chiller kids' TV show, before the title track foregrounds the band's first-rate pastoral jazz-funk chops, Chandler's flute soaring over a loose percussive groove. Belbury Poly have never sounded so organic or expansive, and it's a vibe they maintain throughout, from the gnarly electric guitar and sweet synths of 'The Exile' to the *Kes*-like 'Sunrise At The Crossroads' and the jazzy swing of 'Going, Gone' which belies a sinister tale of dissolution and "night moths". With an ambiguous, disquieting storyline running throughout, *The Path* is a journey you mustn't miss.

Ben Graham

JONNY BENAVIDEZ
My Echo, Shadow And Me
★★★

TIMMION LP

There can't be many young folks who view doo-wop as their natural style of music. But for Jonny Benavidez, doo-wop runs through his veins. The singer hails from San Diego and his inspiration came from his grandfather, who spent his teen years in '60s groups like Sonny Powell & The Night Dreamers. Learning his craft by studying a gifted box filled with R&B, doo-wop and soul 45s, Jonny soon caught the attention of Finnish soul imprint Timmion.

Teaming up with vintage production experts Cold Diamond & Milk, Jonny dropped a couple of singles a few years back, including a feelgood funk/soul knockout punch called 'Let's Get Together', which fooled this writer into thinking it was an original '60s track.

His debut album, in partnership with Daptone Records, includes said track plus 10 more original recordings that effortlessly recall the early '60s soul ballads of The Impressions and Garnett Mimms.

Paul Ritchie

BURNING FERNS
World Of The Wars
★★★★

COUNTRY MILE CD

In an increasingly mad world perhaps the best response is to get creative rather than opt for destructive anger. That seems to be the conclusion reached by Welsh indie-popsters Burning Ferns.

Their latest album, following on from 2018's *Public Mono*, is a state-of-the-western-world address via the medium of clever guitar pop. Songwriter Tony Gray leads the charge with a raft of highly melodic songs, complete with neatly oblique chord changes and intelligent lyrics. Their meanings are not always immediately apparent, but slowly reveal and grow in resonance with each listen. With a stylistic range that draws from powerpop, glam, indie, even rockabilly, *World Of The Wars* displays a pristine, not a note out of place sheen. Are Burning Ferns Wales's cut-price answer to Steely Dan? Perhaps – and that's no bad thing. The 21st century is an increasingly baffling time to be alive but Burning Ferns can help us make sense of it all.

Duncan Fletcher

THE CLEANERS FROM VENUS
K7
★★★★

BANDCAMP CD/CASSETTE

Martin Newell has pursued a singular path for more than four decades and this new album shows him venturing on into fertile territory.

Opening track 'The Beautiful Stoned' gallops from the starting gate with a superb riff redolent of 'Paperback Writer' and The Beatles influence is also apparent on songs such as the disarming 'Golden Girlfriend'. Lyrically, the album is by turns angry, amusing and affecting. Its more introspective moments are also musically sublime, especially 'Finding Anytown', an ambivalent narrative about life in the commuter belt, and 'March Sees January Out'. Best of all is 'A Wedding Band', which tenderly showcases Newell's instinctive empathy for the underdog.

Clive Webb

DATASHOCK
Geltungsbereich Universum
★★★★

BUREAU B CD/LP

Independent label bureau b continues to strike gold with its free-spirited approach to *avant-garde* and underground music, this time courtesy of German collective Datashock.

Channeling the spirit and communality of Berlin's 1968 Zodiak Free Arts Lab and compatriot bands including Amon Düül, Ash Ra Tempel and Tangerine Dream, Datashock have spent the past couple of decades producing multi-genre music that incorporates folk, psych and electronica by way of an ever-changing band of brothers.

Their eighth release *Geltungsbereich Universum* continues to embrace these elements and more, as the hypnotic '60s psychedelic swirl of the pivotal German alternative rock bands and Hawkwind-esque space-rock sit alongside the neo-psychedelic drone of Spacemen 3 and today's Holy Family. This is all wrapped up with the very essence of German post-punk and the smacked-up guitar-driven sound of Neue Deutsche Welle. Datashock have succeeded in creating a sweeping blend of psychedelic music that is both innovative and enthralling.

Sarah Gregory

DENGUE FEVER
Ting Mong
★★★

TUK TUK CD/LP

For those not already in the know Dengue Fever are a maverick six-piece LA-based American-Cambodian ensemble.

Ting Mong arrives as the band›s seventh studio album and their first since 2015's *The Deepest Lake*, whose title refers to a scarecrow-like effigy used to ward off evil spirits and disease. Debuting with their maiden release in 2003, Dengue Fever can look back on a two-decade career of cross-cultural exploration and experimentation which among other things saw them grace the soundtrack of Jim Jarmusch's 2005 feature *Broken Flowers*. So much for the hard facts.

The star of the show here is undoubtedly Cambodian vocalist Chham Nimol, whose commanding presence transports the left of centre, sluggishly melancholic quality of the backing tracks into another dimension. Think the far-off exotica of world music fused with the comparative familiarity of understated mellow indie-rock and you're already halfway there.

Grahame Bent

FRANKIE & THE WITCH FINGERS
Data Doom
★★★★

GREENWAY / REVERBERATION APPRECIATION SOCIETY CD/LP

'Rifftastic' is somewhat overused for something that isn't even a word, but sometimes it really is the only one that will do. Such is the case with 'Empire', the epic opener to Frankie & The Witch Fingers' seventh long player, where the riff in question is as strident as any Family Stone stomp-along while, oddly considering the lack of horns, displaying the brassy boldness of early Dexys. 'Empire' was so good I had to play it several times before moving on.

Which is not to say the rest of the album flagged. 'Burn Me Down' has Faith No More ferocity, and both 'Weird Dog' and 'Doom Boom' could grace almost any Casablanca-era P-Funk album. Full throttle seems to be the album's designated pace, but the humorously titled 'Mild Davis' and the dreamily psychedelic 'Syster System' provide respite from the pummelling. Ultimately, *Data Doom* sounds like a band having fun, and fortunately, it's infectious.

Peter Gallagher

GROOVY UNCLE FEATURING JANE WRANGHAM
Make It Sound Like An Accident
★★★★

TROUSERPHONIC CD

A visit from relatives is not always welcome but that cannot be said of Groovy Uncle.

Here is the 11th album from Glenn Prangnell's almost one-man band. He retains a knack for writing melodies that sound instantly familiar with wry lyrics that conjure poetry from the everyday, yet songs like 'Laughing Gas' and 'Kenny's Imaginary Friend' share a similar sound and sensibility to the '60s homages of The Dukes Of Stratosphear. Jane Wrangham contributes soulful lead vocals to two sadder tunes, including her own 'Salt In My Eyes'. Most of the tracks are short, sweet and primed for action, but there's also the ambitious suite 'Far From The Mad In-Crowd' which, driven by harpsichord and Mellotron, could pass for King Crimson with a sense of humour.

Clive Webb

Frankie & The Witch Fingers. Not all doom and gloom

THE HANGEE 5
Going Back To Good Valley
★★★★

FOR MONSTERS CD

This new album from The Hangee 5, from Cagliari in Sardinia could easily be their best, most consistent outing thus far. It features a full-on barrage of blistering sounds, accentuated by pounding drums and bass, wild fuzz-fuelled guitar and great teen-punk vocals, adding layers of excitement, surprise and menace to many selections.

Although they've taken on a pretty strong garage and psych stance – the likes of 'Because You', 'Never Have You Ever' and the superlative 'Demon In Disguise being amongst the more obvious examples – they've nonetheless kept their surf roots intact. Instrumentals such as 'Corncobs', the excellent 'Cold Front Calling' and a kooky little *Munsters*-esque beauty called 'Boogers Attack' are evidence of this. The stand-out favourite could easily change from day to day, but presently it's 'Hey You', a stomping, fabulously melodic garage assault, the central riff echoing both The Kinks and The Troggs – maybe the Raiders too. The vitality, plus high energy level retained throughout should keep listeners attentive.

Lenny Helsing

HOLY WAVE
Five Of Cups
★★★

SUICIDE SQUEEZE CD/LP

Cradled by spacey guitar lines, 'Bog Song' (the instant highlight on Holy Wave's new record) opens with deep-in-the-night pondering, as lights and eerie apparitions are observed from a window. It's a good visual counterpart to the sound of *Five Of Cups*, an album of narcotic neo-psych with synthed-out bedroom-pop undertones.

The Texas quartet craft songs that are thick with effects and shrouded in a pensive haze – if not particularly distinctive, these slow-burners will surely find favour with lovers of au courant trip-friendly pop. As Holy Wave flash out their multi-layered sound, some notable guests make for welcome additions. Estrella del Sol brings Chelsea Wolfe-like vocals to album closer 'Happier', while Mexican duo Lorelle Meets The Obsolete help turn 'The Darkest Timeline' into a desert séance that pairs unworldly electronics and insistent guitars. Bonus points if the song's title turns out to be a reference to TV's *Community*.

Camilla Aisa

LES IMPRIMÉS
Rêverie
★★★★

BIG CROWN CD/LP

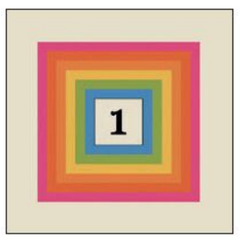
Norwegian Morten Martens may not be the first person who springs to mind when you think of current purveyors of vintage-sounding soul, though that may change following the release of this first album under his working moniker Les Imprimés. Having built his own studio on the island of Odderøya, it was COVID lockdowns that allowed him to dig deep and create the songs and sounds for *Rêverie.*

It's a sublime mix of sit-down soul, doo-wop, heartfelt balladry, and early disco, with lyrics that address the highs, lows, and complexities of love. Martens plays virtually every instrument on the album. With its coherent mood-creating vibe it bears repeated start-to-finish listens, but if you're looking for a stand-out cut try 'Still Here' where Martens brings to mind Aaron Neville's effortless falsetto. Those who prefer more grit in their soul music should look elsewhere but if smooth sophistication is your thing, dive in.

Duncan Fletcher

LACK OF AFRO
Square One
★★★

BASTION MUSIC GROUP CD/LP



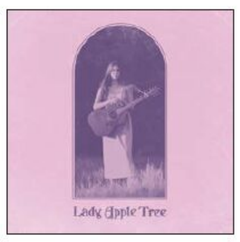
Adam Gibbons has been mixing samples with live instruments and guest vocalists to produce a melting pot of funk, soul and hip-hop-inspired music since 2006. Readers might recall the sampling of Steve Marriott's vocal on 2008 single 'Touch My Soul'. That upbeat vibe is apparent on the latest album which was inspired by a recent trip to produce at the legendary FAME studios at Muscle Shoals.

Yet *Square One* is a resolutely modern sounding record that might not be every Shindigger's cup of tea, though you can't help but smile along to the bouncy 'Let It All Out', which recalls the quirky hip-hop sensibilities of Ugly Duckling, or the lovely 'Least Favourite Wonder', which sounds uncannily like Alex Turner on vocals. Genuine guests include The Haggis Horns, Greg Blackman and deejay Craig Charles' son Jack Tyson-Charles, whose silky smooth vocals shine on the glittering Chic-like disco groove of 'All Night'.

Paul Ritchie

LADY APPLE TREE
Lady Apple Tree
★★★★

BANDCAMP DIGITAL



The ghostly voices of Emmylou Harris, Judee Sill, and Joni Mitchell seem to be reappearing throughout Los Angeles. Haylie Hostetter, AKA Lady Apple Tree, has emerged on the scene as one of California's brightest apparitions. Her self-titled EP is a beautiful diorama that tries to contain the many divergent threads of folk, all bound by her soaring voice.

The sounds range from cowgirl reverie ('Midnight Oil') to swirling fiddle fugue ('Round And Round'). It's refreshing to hear a nostalgic voice that still has range and is supported by ambitious instrumentation. Though her voice echoes earlier inflections, Lady Apple Tree rambles to folk's outermost perimeters, at times bouncing like Cash or pleading like Carpenter. Showcasing a lovely folk crescendo, pop-infused backing vocals, and Hostetter's lust for narrative (informed by a Brothers Grimm tale), 'Silver Hands' might be the catchiest track on this eight-tracker.

Tess Carges

LAMP OF THE UNIVERSE
The Akashic Field
★★★★

SOUND EFFECT CD

The Akashic Field contains the collective memories of every thought, action, and event that has ever happened (or will happen), imprinted on the astral plane beyond the reach of human senses. Like his Incredible String Band namesake, New Zealander Craig Williamson has forged a lengthy career seeking that special knowledge through his highly meditative, spiritual recordings.

Not as navel-gazingly introspective as previous efforts, there's still a cornucopia of backward guitars, room-spinning arrangements, Eastern-flavoured atmospherics, chanted lyrics, and trance-inducing hypnotic rhythms to feed the more discerning head. Keyboards and teeth-rattling solos percolate throughout the haze, with 'Seventh Seal' and 'The Messianic Rule' imbuing a wall-pinning Loop crunch verging into Sabbath territory while 'Descendants' ventures dangerously into metal headbanging. The sitar-drenched 'Mystic Circle' triumphantly returns to heavy-lidded territory and the pastoral, Mellotron-drenched 'Into The Sages Rise' is the best of two bonus tracks from last year's album sessions.

Jeff Penczak

LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

LULUC
Diamonds
★★★★

COMMUNITY MUSIC CD/LP

As album number five arrives, Zoë Randell and Steve Hassett have honed a sound that has well-defined roots (modern folk's brooding solemnity, Mazzy Star's hazy dreaminess) but is entirely their own.

Near the end of *Diamonds* they take a classic (Stones-penned, Faithfull-immortalised 'As Tears Go By') and inhabit it so naturally that it ends up blending seamlessly with the original compositions. Randell's contralto is driven by an elegant, understated poignancy that makes it quietly commanding, and often breath-taking. *Diamonds*' sonic tapestry is stripped-down and refined all at once (simplicity is indeed a virtue in the world of Luluc); when a new instrument enters (like the saxophone on centrepiece 'The Shore') it does so with remarkable emotional depth. Other notables include beatific closer 'The Sky', with its warm embrace of goodbyes, 'Snow', and the enchanting title track – we don't get enough songs with a lyrical nod to Doug Sahm, do we?

Camilla Aisa

MAPACHE
Swinging Stars
★★★★★

INNOVATIVE LEISURE CD/LP

Mindful of preaching to the converted, Californian duo Mapache have always had something special. Emerging in 2017 with their tight-knit harmonies that recalled brothers Louvin and Everly, most *Shindig*! scribes continue to be smitten. It's with great inevitability then to declare, their fourth (or fifth if you count their covers LP) is just as wholesome as the ones that preceded it.

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Mapache. Celestial music

Noticeably, *Swinging Stars* marks a point where close friends Clay and Sam expand their sound somewhat with additional players and carefully layered instrumentation. They've always collaborated but this time around a fuller sound is evident on the rolling plains of 'French Kiss' or the flickering cosmic-country of 'Reflecting Everything'. The anguished 'Ghosts' and 'Please Stay' see them stretching their emotions further than ever before. Meanwhile the intimate 'Midnight' reminds us of what made them so good in the first place. Five albums in and we're already praying for more.

Paul Ritchie

CHARIF MEGARBANE
Marzipan
★★★★★

HABIBI FUNK CD/LP

When Habibi Funk chose to make Lebanese multi-instrumentalist, composer and producer Charif Megarbane's *Marzipan* their first full-length contemporary release, they knew they were onto something extremely special.

Recorded in Beirut and Lisbon, the infinitely rich stylings audible throughout *Marzipan* perfectly blend a kaleidoscope of shimmering Lebanese and Eastern Mediterranean influences with the residual memory of vintage Franco-Italian film soundtracks and library recording maestros, including Ennio Morricone, Piero Umiliani, Piero Piccioni, Alessandro Alessandroni, Alain Goraguer and Francois de Roubaix. It's a creative balancing act made in heaven which, when allied to Megarbane's intensely honed musical imagination and compositional skills, makes for some spectacular results, in particular on 'Pas De Dialogue', 'Portemilio', 'Pale Baleine' and the title track. Brimming with allure and the heady scent of distant shores *Marzipan i*s a wondrously enticing listening experience from start to finish.

Grahame Bent

MIRROR TREE
Mirror Tree
★★★

INNOVATIVE LEISURE CD/LP

An LA-based airline pilot and classically trained pianist, Michael Gold is the son of respected songwriter Sharon Robinson and Leonard Cohen's godson, but more relevant is his apprenticeship in nu-disco band Poolside, with another former member, Filip Nikolic, acting as Mirror Tree's producer.

Gold's falsetto vocal is typical of much contemporary US psych-pop, and the predominant colours on tracks like the gently chugging 'See It Through' and soulful yacht-pop ballad 'Another Day' are pastel and neon, with only the West Coast harmonies on 'Feel It' breaking through the overall chillwave haze. 'Along For The Ride' channels easy-listening exotica *a la* Stereolab, but with extra froth and lacking the stern Marxist rigour, while '300 Miles' features rhythms from Dusseldorf, melodies from Istanbul, and aesthetics from American Apparel. Still, with its vintage Farfisa sounds, low-key jazz flourishes, and a comforting sense of spacey melancholia, *Mirror Tree* might just grow on you.

Ben Graham

THE MUDD CLUB
Give Me A Thrill
★★★★★

RAVING POP BLAST LP

Second album from one of the most inspired modern garage/rock 'n' roll gangs around. Currently based in Wales where this collection was recorded, the group, until fairly recently, had been kicking around the back streets of Bristol. Lead vocalist and guitarist Sadie Morningstar and her younger drumming brother Julian West lived in Louisiana, before emigrating here.

From the opening blast of 'Friday Night On A Monday Morning', through the goofily cool 'Calendar Ghoul', 'New Tattoo' and 'Brand New Shoes', it's killer riffs, wild breaks and rumbles aplenty with thumping kit action and attitude-laden vocals providing this rollercoaster of surf riding, teenage party thrills; almost everything undergirded by some Cramps-like ghost train reverberations. Just like The Saints before them, The Mudd Club also include a frenetic cover of 'Wild About You' by original Australian '60s punk outcasts The Missing Links. Limited white vinyl pressing, which is likely to sell out fast after the group's Glastonbury Festival appearance. Get in and get on it.

Lenny Helsing

THE ON AND ONS
Let Ya Hair Down
★★★★

CITADEL CD

Australian combo The On And Ons are brothers Glenn and Brian Morris on lead vocals and guitars, and drums and vocals, respectively, with Clyde Bramley on bass, vocals and keyboards. On the go for some years now, *Let Ya Hair Down* is the group's fifth long-player.

The various elements – beat, as well as soulful early rock references, coupled with Glenn's flair for writing powerful, creative pop sounds – are brought together here in total harmony. Throughout the title track, the amazing 'Games People Play', 'Run To Tomorrow' and more, it's as if The Easybeats, Creation, Small Faces and Masters Apprentices are rolled into one, reimagined in an early '70s freak-rock/glam apparition. This heavier angle – with more freakbeat-influenced turns and post-psychedelic hard-rock stylings – hadn't been much in evidence throughout their previous powerpop-slanted material, but provides a welcome avenue, of which further exploration could be to their future benefit.

Lenny Helsing

PAINT
Loss For Words
★★★★

GRAPE ST INC LP

The third Paint full-length couldn't have asked for a more fitting title: Allah-Las founding member Pedrum Siadatian's new solo compositions are mostly instrumental, seemingly too awestruck by their own freeform discoveries to try to verbalise them. Instead, vocal apparitions present themselves as one more layer to the album's rich and wandering quilt of sound.

More than songs, these are aural vignettes – a brew of inquisitive electronics and all-embracing, sample-friendly modern psychedelia that won't deal with the restrictions of the traditional song form (even less so those of genre). At the root of it all there's Siadatian's newfound interest in the more *avant-garde* tendencies of kosmische music, made clear especially by kraut-leaning cuts such as 'Rokc Muzik' and 'Lily Dust'. It might take a while to get acquainted with the many rooms of *Loss For Words*, their many tunnels and inscrutable shapes, but repeated visits are rewarding and endlessly fascinating.

Camilla Aisa

ROB GOULD AND FRIENDS
Nursery Cryme
★★★

FRUITS DE MER LP+CD

Wisely, Gould and friends (including Fruits de Mer favourites Jay Tausig and Icarus Peel) follow Mike Rutherford's advice to "play all the right notes, then the songs will sound quite good" as they replicate Genesis's 1971 long-player.

Gould sticks to the original template throughout, but more echo on 'The Musical Box' compliments its eerie story. You may miss Gabriel's flute, but the enhanced keyboard arrangements add a more progressive/classical air. 'Hogweed' retains its Crimson-esque influence with a more prominent bass and Banks's lovely classical interlude faithfully replicated, and 'Seven Stones' still generates chills and tears courtesy Peel's stellar (rock, not prog) guitar work. 'Harold The Barrel' has more of a rock vibe than the original's vaudevillian silliness, and 'Harlequin' retains Rutherford's dreamy atmospherics, but even 'Salmacis''s gorgeous Mellotron bath can't compensate for Gabriel's incomprehensible lyrics. The CD edition updates two obscure contemporary single sides to good effect.

Jeff Penczak

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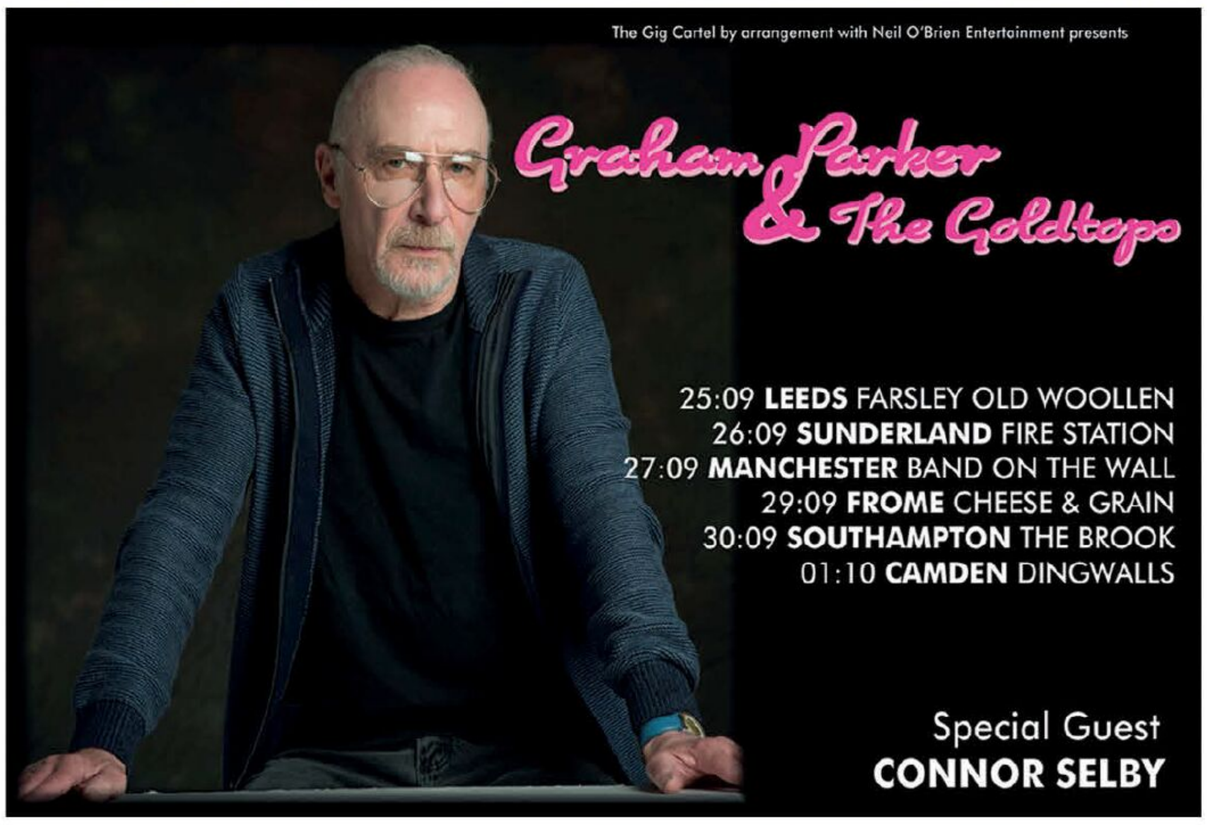
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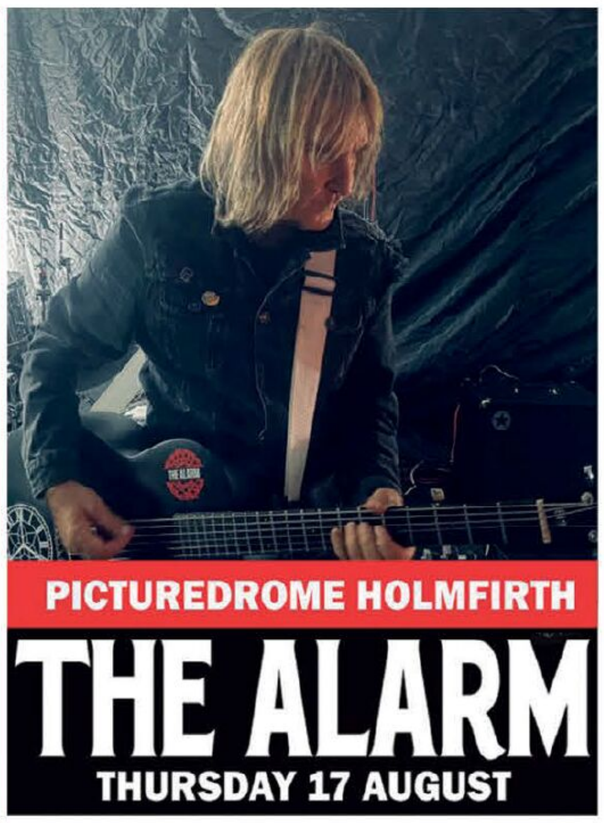
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ROBERT ROTIFER
Holding Hands In Petropolis
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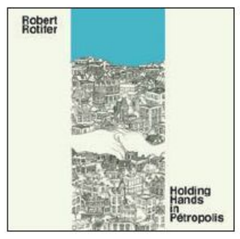
GARE DE NORD CD/LP



On his 11th album, Robert Rotifer is talkin' 'bout his generation: the indie kids, now in their 50s, finding themselves middle-aged in a dystopian world they may have seen coming, but somehow couldn't prevent.

'That Was The Time' recalls being an ineffectual teenage agitator in the '80s, while also being about the pointlessness of songs about the past; 'Man In Sandwich Board' observes that even if you could go back to warn the world, no-one would listen anyway. Such arch self-awareness is Rotifer's forte, delivered in a deadpan, half-spoken baritone on Francophile waltz 'Red, Yellow, Orange & Green', a duet with Amelia Fletcher (Heavenly) and 'Chewing On The Bones Of The Sacred Cow', which critiques our retro-fixated culture and includes a Byrdsian guitar coda to ram home the point. Embracing the spirit of *La Nouvelle Vague* in musical form, the tunes may be gentle, but the insights are uncomfortably sharp.

Ben Graham

MILO SCAGLIONI
Invincible Summer
★★★★

BANDCAMP CASSETTE

With a title drawn from a Camus quote invoking the indefatigable spirit of mankind, Milanese songwriter Milo Scaglioni's second album makes its creative aspirations clear from the outset.

Recorded over a five year stretch with producer, musician and Blackstar Studio owner Angelo Di Mino, its 10 songs run the gamut of styles from catchy lead single 'Locked In A Circle' to the sinister throb of 'Beautiful Daughter', and the chaotic punky energy of 'Electric Shush'. The whimsy of Scaglioni's former band-mate Jim Noir is an obvious influence, as is the much-cited Elliott Smith, 'Sketches In The Sand' showcasing Scaglioni's baritone vocals and fingerpicking skills before its Beatles-y outro. The album's twin centrepieces 'The Sound Of One Hand Clapping' and 'From Paris To Amsterdam' are psychedelically-inclined, the former ponderous, the latter with a triumphant coda that one wishes went on for longer. This is ambitious stuff, and it pays off.

Christopher Budd

THE SEXTONES
Love Can't Be Borrowed
★★★★

RECORD KICKS CD/LP

The Sextones' vintage moniker suits their cool, cruising, retro soul sound. The band's name comes in part from front man and guitarist Mark Sexton, whose smooth falsetto tones effortlessly blend into an exquisitely laidback production courtesy of Kelly Finnigan (Monophonics).

Appropriately titled opener 'Daydreaming', with its shimmering Delfonics-indebted sitar flourishes, is a stone-cold Lowrider classic in waiting and a real head turner for what's to come. There's a dreamlike texture to this record that also recalls early Mayor Hawthorne or Brit counterparts Stone Foundation. Nothing is in your face, over the top or contrived. It sounds like everything you'd expect from a contemporary band respectfully interpreting authentic old-school soul vibes. For sure, there's a ton of modern-day combos who sound similar, making it easy to be overlooked. But there's plenty here to suggest The Sextones should take pole position on today's Lowrider soul scene.

Paul Ritchie

SOFT HEARTED SCIENTISTS
Waltz Of The Weekend
★★★★

THE HIP REPLACEMENT CD

The Welsh wizards are back with a 75-minute psychedelic extravaganza packed to the rafters with frilly-shirted pop earworms ('What Grows Inside The Garden'), a title track recounting a haunted "trip" through Tintern Abbey (perhaps fixed up with a "sweet dose"?), the Bonzo-esque 'Rode My Bike', and the haunted house waltz 'Who Loves The Moon' that's part fairy tale singalong (featuring seven vocal tunes), part skip-through-the-meadows jolly time.

Evenly divided between toe-tapping nuggets and stretched-out cloud-starers, the typical Scientist pop potpourri palette is painted with a swirling array of colourful characters, a few Easter eggs for musicologists to unravel (cue Three Dog Night, Claypool Lennon Delirium, Pink Floyd), and a penchant for genre-melding mash-ups that keep our ears on our toes awaiting the next detour (roll up for the prog-come-cod-dub reggae 'The Things We Make').

Jeff Penczak

THE STRIPED BANANAS
Rayguns Of Love
★★★★

COSMIC SUNSHINE LP

The Striped Bananas' seventh delivers more psychedelic pop goodness from Connecticut husband-and-wife duo Duncan and Chantelle Shepard. They divide their album into the Blast Off side and the Chill Out side, but in truth songs from each side could wander onto the other undetected, with no detriment to the overall sound.

Curiously, the highlights are both tributes to female pioneers from the first half of the 20th century, with 'Polina The Night Witch' a mournful celebration of Polina Makogon, commander of an all-female Soviet bomber squadron during World War Two, and 'Oh Clara' a shimmering mariachi-inflected commemoration of original It Girl Clara Bow. Other top tunes include 'Triage Of The Damned', a '50s ballad with lovely Mellotron, the lilting alt-country title track, and 'Midnight Girl' with its Bolan-esque guitar groove. That said, it's all good, with any of the songs fully capable of taking up residence in your ear.

Peter Gallagher

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Shine On: A Tribute To Pete Ham
★★★

Y&T MUSIC 2-CD

A selection of familiar unknowns from the worlds of US alt-country/Americana/powerpop offer their tributes to singer-songwriter Pete Ham. Practically every one of Ham's Badfinger tunes is present ('No Matter What' twice) alongside a handful of his demos; cue Mary Lee Kortes's opening remake of 'No More' that transforms what is essentially a suicide note into a strident, windows-down country-rocker.

Highlights include Mary Karlzen's countryfied 'We're For The Dark', Diane Ward's swing-style 'Lay Me Down', Nelson

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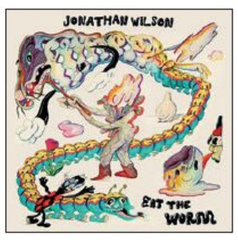
The Sextones. Not to be found in the library

Bragg's smooth 'Carry On Till Tomorrow', and note-for-note treatments by the likes of The Smithereens' Dennis Diken (an ambitious 'Dennis'), powerpop maven Ken Sharp ('Just A Chance', natch) and Rob Bonfiglio (an affecting 'Lonely You'). Sadly, the fragile, emotionally wrought nature of much of Ham's material doesn't translate well to earnest bar-room roots-rock, which renders about a third of this set a challenging listen.
Andy Morten

JONATHAN WILSON
Eat The Worm
★★★★★

BMG CD/LP



Quick version? The latest album from all-round polymath Jonathan Wilson, *Eat The Worm* is sonically stunning, funny, and filled with scathing rage.

The opening 'Marzipan' is a sweet piano shuffle with soft vocals, with Wilson recounting his early 20s in Brooklyn. There are outbreaks of eerie strings and at one point what sounds like a random ringtone. Towards the end, he murmurs, "Well we've come to the part of the song right now, where I'm gonna fuck around." And fuck around he does – exquisitely. Like Harry Nilsson, Jack Nitszche or Todd Rundgren, Wilson plays with tone, time and space – resulting in a lush, brainy record that tests the fourth wall, like Wile E Coyote running off the edge of the frame. This is track one. It's all this good, surprising, and vivid. So, it should really be no surprise that I'm about to run out of words. You know what to do.
Martin Ruddock

WOODS
Perennial
★★★★

WOODSIST CD/LP

As they approach their 20-year anniversary, Woods, by now a proper indie institution with a solid discography and its own label and festival, seem to make a point of moving forward.

The music of *Perennial* originated from loops created by frontman Jeremy Earl, later developed into three-piece jam session. Compared to its predecessors, the album does indeed have a stronger free-flowing, contemplative feel ('White Winter Melody'). Instrumental movements are frequent, and they're not the kind of self-indulgent improvisations that inevitably prove way more entertaining for those who play them than those who get to listen to them – on the contrary, wordless sketches such as opener 'The Seed' make for some of the album's most captivating moments. *Perennial* moves aptly between the pastoral and the cinematic ('The Wind Again') and brims with the quiet emotion of a well-travelled set of music makers still discovering new truths about themselves.
Camilla Aisa

Pete Atkin revisits a bulging songbook without his partner for the first time
PHOTO: STEVE ULLATHORNE

Returning Legends

PETE ATKIN
The Luck Of The Draw
★★★★

HILLSIDE MUSIC CD

The songs of Pete Atkin and Clive James were never destined to achieve mass commercial appeal. James wrote lyrics that were too cerebral, Atkin setting them to music that moved the heart more than the foot. Theirs is nonetheless a brilliant, unique body of work – songs that amuse, sadden and inspire.

It's a partnership that persists despite the death of James in 2019. Here Atkin returns to their vast songbook accompanied by a stellar band of jazz musicians led by pianist Simon Wallace. There's a stateliness to the new version of the 1970 title track, a lively swing to 'I Wouldn't Hear A Word Against The Spring', a languid air to 'The Party's Moving On'. Atkin sings in a warmly intimate voice lightly weathered by age. While he's previously recorded most of the material himself, the album also features his own reading of the lovely 'Winter Kept Us Warm' written for Julie Covington. And then there's the closing 'Together At Last', a witty and poignant self-reflection on creative collaboration and close friendship.
Clive Webb

TWINK
Think Pink V
★★★

ERM/CHERRY RED CD

The latest release from the Pink Fairies/Pretty Things/Tomorrow legend is reassuringly on-brand, at least when it comes to countercultural and new-age thinking. Good on him for still flying the freak flag that was first waved in the free festival era of the '70s. Along the way he's picked up new musical influences too.

Think Pink V opens with 'Sun Is A Star', which features North African textures atop programmed beats. 'Silver White Horses' has a touch of '90s baggy with its rolling beats. Dance and rave culture are constant touchstones throughout, with 'Rainbow Warriors' an all-out dance track paying tribute to the consciousness-raising heroes we've lost, both musical and ecological. There's self-deprecating humour at play in 'My Rose', on which Twink's grandiose proclamations are punctured by witty one-line ripostes, whereas 'Lost And Found' is a soft acoustic piece looking back at life's journey and trying to make sense of it all.
Duncan Fletcher

WRECKLESS ERIC
Leisureland
★★★★

TAPETE CD/LP

During the enforced break from his extensive touring schedule caused by the COVID pandemic and ensuing lockdown, Wreckless Eric began to consider the places and pursuits of his youth and to place them in a kind of generic seaside setting that he named Standing Water, loosely based on the town of Cromer on the Norfolk coast.

This set of songs calls up the feelings of a town where there's nostalgia for the old days of seaside fun but also an underlying sadness and deprivation, a land of poisonous brownfield sink estates and unsafe employment. It's an album imbued with melancholy, interlaced with occasional interjections of hope, and soundtracked by Joe Meek-style synthesised backing tracks and instrumentals, invented local pop groups and occasional returns to the artist's earlier style.

Eric Goulden escaped from his youthful home of Newhaven but his sympathy for those caught in an endless circle of helpless torpor and impassivity bleeds from every note.
Henry Hutton

I say! It's Say She She
PHOTO: KAELAN BAROWSKY

tracks

CAMILLA AISA rounds up this month's digital downloads and stray oddities

This month's fine selection of Tracks kicks off with a multilingual groove. Our favourite discodelic trio **SAY SHE SHE** re-imagine the world as one big dancefloor, and the platform-booted joy that **'C'Est Si Bon'** brims with is positively irresistible, lit up by neon lights that are equal parts late '70s New York and Ville Lumière.

Another Francophone delight, you say? Mais oui. Expert purveyor of retro pop nuggets **KACIMI** has teamed up with **AUDREY K** for a new number that brings to mind the sensuous breeziness of classic '60s French pop duets. **'Les Avant-Gardes'** sits evenly between revisited *yé-yé* and Velvets-enamoured fuzz.

The announcement of a new **DEVENDRA BANHART** album is always great news around here. Even more so if the upcoming release finds him working with Welsh maverick Cate Le Bon. Enriched by her exceptional, instantly recognisable production skills, with the slow burning, brooding magnetism of **'Twin'**, Banhart is reaching new songwriterly heights.

Here's a lovely listening companion for your summer walks, courtesy of Scottish artist **JANE FRANCES**. 'Floral Haze' seems to take its cue from delicate psych-pop and nature-immersed singer-songwriter tunes from the early '70s. With its soft soulfulness and flair for the spellbinding, the song is covered in sunlight.

Speaking of the ever-pleasing combination of dreaminess and daylight glow, **DAYAWAY** (the summer-friendly alter ego of New York indie-pop duo Clavvs, aka Amber Renee and Graham Marsh) hone it on the tellingly titled 'A Brief Dream Of Sun'. It's an enveloping neo-psych number warped under blissful sunrays.

A new song from one of indie-rock's finest auteurs? Yes please. **KRISTIN HERSH** (Throwing Muses, 50 Foot Wave) has announced a new record coming in autumn and if the lead single is any indication, it's going to be a special one. Cradled by atmospheric violin and tenderly picked acoustic guitar, 'Dandelion' finds the American rocker in a rather arresting Albion folk mood.

If you're feeling nostalgic for the days (somewhere in the second half of the '90s) when you'd be turning the radio on and catching new powerpoppin' hooks, we recommend spending some time with Philadelphia-based artist **SHAMIR**'s latest offering. 'Oversized Sweater' channels that spirit through a multi-layered depth that's decidedly of today. Catchy *and* affecting.

If you like your powerpop kicks to be more happily nostalgic, then don your finest double denim and meet **THE TAYLOR TWINS**: Oliver on lead vocals, guitar and keys, Eddie on bass, drums and backing vocals, both playing loud from their self-made studio. **'I Know I'm Late'** rocks with classic spirit and timeless charm.

The pace slows down a little, nature reappears. That '70s feel again, but completely different: what **JOE BOURDET** conjures is cosmic-country bliss. **'Silk Robe, Garden Flowers'** is a delicious sonic balm, all atmospheric pedal steel, Burritos-inspired twang and the kind of caressing harmonies even the firmest Eagles dissenter will happily surrender to.

A willingness to travel towards the desert and the days gone by also propels **ERIC SILVERMAN**'s new album, recorded in Landers, California on a Tascam 388 console that previously belonged to none other than Jerry Garcia. The vibe is all there, its soothing power existing outside of time, and on standout **'Better Days'** it's introduced by spacey swathes of vintage synths.

Titular affinities bring us to the next single, a new offering from another California-based musician, **ERIK ALESI**. **'Best Of Days'** starts with Americana-tinged stomp [a reflection, perhaps, of the days he used to play honky tonk], before turning into a driving slice of highly melodic pop that calls for singalongs from the very first listen.

Our final track of the month brings a change of scenery with it. **LANGUAGE FIELD**, the new project of UK deejay/producer Paul Cheshire, exists far from deserts, high roads or city life, its synthetic quilt of sound favouring the abstract and the unworldly. **'Hallucinations'** is our favourite number from new album *Fearful Symmetry*: pulsing retro-electronica with reverie-inducing powers.

HOPSCOTCH / ANDWELLA
Look At The Lights Go Up / Hold On To Your Mind
★★★★
MEASURED MILE

Following bespoke pairings of soulful '60s femme-pop and deep library-funk, Bob Stanley's Measured Mile imprint once again hits the spot when it comes to assuaging the cravings of cash-strapped deejays.

Pre-Forever More/Average White Band act Hopscotch's 1968 45 (a copy of which recently fetched £400 on discogs) has long topped wants lists, its brassy John Cameron arrangement and catchy post-mod moves justifying the hype. 'Hold On To Your Mind' sees reconfigured Irish psych-rockers Andwella's Dream getting their funk on across four minutes of percussive, crisply-produced dancefloor fodder that shows the influence of Blood, Sweat & Tears and Chicago on the UK rock sound.

Andy Morten

KIT SEBASTIAN
L'Addio / Hayat
★★★★
MR BONGO

Responsible for *Shindig*!'s favourite new album of 2021, London-based, world-scoping duo Kit Sebastian (aka Kit Martin and Merve Erdem) have since then released a string of mouth-watering singles. Their latest hits the spot once again with knowledgable grooviness and a sound that, while promptly acknowledging its roots, is ultimately and utterly Kit Sebastian.

On 'Hayat', the duo pay homage to the Turkish and Azerbaijan musical traditions that shaped them. The result is a perfect distillation of their idiosyncratic, endlessly fascinating take on global psychedelia. 'L'Addio' travels elsewhere: it delves deeper into lush orchestration and looks back fondly on the Italian pop of yore, filtering its dramatic tendencies (skillfully captured by Erdem) through Kit Sebastian's own signature globetrotting stylishness. In less capable hands, these would probably feel like excuses to show off wide-ranging crate-digger tastes. Instead, they make for a coherent discourse, and a strong case for music's eagerness to transcend boundaries.

Camilla Aisa

LES POPPERMOST
Les Poppermost EP
★★★★
DISQUES ROGUE

The great Clydeside Fabs pastiche explosion continues to gather pace with this four-track EP exclusively recorded for Toulouse's super-hip boutique label Disques Rogue by Glasgow's foremost Fabs

Andwella hold onto their minds

obsessives The Poppermost.

Very much tuning into the Fabs' universe circa 1963-64, armed with an impressive array of vintage Rickenbacker, Hofner, Gretsch and Ludwig gear and led by the outrageously on the ball Beatles copyist Joe Kane, the Poppers return as a fully-fledged quartet with four songs alive with the spirit and minutae of all things Fab. Despite being thoroughly immersed in the sound and stylings of the day, Kane miraculously manages to reference the current cost of living crisis on the fabulous 'Teabags, Milk 'N' Sugar'. And that's to say nothing of the period perfect 'I Know You Know I Know'. Mimicry of this class hasn't been heard since the heady days of The Rutles. Brilliant.

Grahame Bent

THE SENCES
Done With You EP

★★★★

LOST IN TYME

It's not often we hear from such a young group, at least with it comes to giving off such a strong sense of authority and authenticity in their sound. But that's the way it is throughout the three original compositions that make up the debut record by The Sences. From Greece, they range in age from 14 to 17 years, yet sound as if they're already masters of their destination.

Within seconds, 'Done With You' will have you floored. An unrelenting onslaught of stinging fuzz, cavernous ensemble backing and a ton of snot-caked attitude masquerading as lead vocals will leave you drained, elated and wanting more. Fear not, as the topside's second track 'Behind Me' is almost as good, and keeps the intensity running high. On the flip can be found a gorgeous slice of folk-punk in the shape of 'Be Over'. This slow-paced jangler is also a heart-stopper, recalling the genius of such Texan masters as The 13th Floor Elevators and The Golden Dawn.

Lenny Helsing

SURPRISE CHEF
Friendship EP

★★★★

BIG CROWN

if you're struck by the realisation that Surprise Chef's *Friendship* sounds like it picks up where the band's acclaimed last album *Education & Recreation* left off you'd be spot on. Why? Because *Friendship* comprises six tracks recorded during the *Education & Recreation* sessions that didn't make it onto the album purely for reasons of space. So thanks to Surprise Chef's prolific studio output we get to experience a welcome reprise of the infectious grooves and funky vibes so typical of the forementioned album.

There can't be many Aussie outfits who've managed to perfect the whole retro cinematic/library-funk session crew thing to anything like the same degree as Melbourne's Surprise Chef. Rich in abundant echoes of David Axelrod, '70s Franco-Italian library recordings and the dusty grooves plundered so effectively in old school hip-hop, this latest missive deserves considered and in-depth exploration.

Grahame Bent

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Rekinked EP

★★★

FRUITS DE MER

Four slices of "the English way of life" from the fertile imagination of Ray Davies. The Flower Machine have released songs about LSD, mushrooms and "tea" so their *Pepper*-esque spin on Ray's most psychedelic excursion 'See My Friends' is a natural choice with a perfectly dreamy arrangement, backwards guitars, tambourines and other accoutrements to achieve maximum heaviosity. Kevin Robertson jolly-steps through 'Do You Remember Walter' with an air of XTC in the room – a perfect marriage of powerpop and psychedelic embellishments.

Crystal Jacqueline and Icarus Peel step out from The Honey Pot to have a go at 'Shangri-La', dropping in tablas, sitars, synthy things that make petty noises, and guitars that go WAH-WAH, before Peel's spoken word interlude sets up the rousing choral coda. Finally, The Tubeheads stomp on fuzz pedals throughout 'Set Me Free' B-side 'I Need You', Ray's blatant rewrite of 'You Really Got Me' gone garage bonkers.

Jeff Penczak

THE YARDBIRDS
Over Under Sideways Down / Jeff's Boogie

★★★★

DEMON 45

Presented in a facsimile of the original US picture sleeve, this remastered pressing of the rare US stereo mixes arrives as yet another welcome reminder of the colossal talent that was lost with the passing of Jeff Beck earlier this year.

Originally released in May 1966 as the second of a string of three classic Yardbirds 45s following in the slipstream of 'Shapes Of Things' and preceding 'Happenings Ten Years Time Ago', 'Over Under Sideways Down' arrived at the height of The Yardbirds' purple patch that coincided with Jeff Beck's eventful and explosive sojourn with the band. Apparently inspired by Bill Haley's 'Rock Around The Clock' and famous for its distinctively Eastern-sounding guitar riff and hazily psychedelic choruses, 'Over Under Sideways Down' ranks as one of *the* greatest Yardbirds 45s. Flipside 'Jeff's Boogie' finds the titular guitarist in his best Chuck Berry-inspired instrumental speed freak mode.

Grahame Bent

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

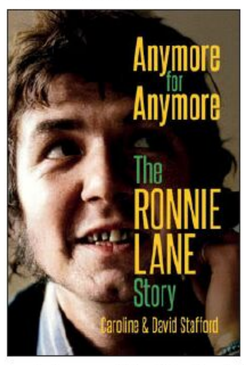
The Dave Clark Five on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, 1964

ANYMORE FOR ANYMORE: THE RONNIE LANE STORY

Caroline & David Stafford

★★★

OMNIBUS PRESS



For all his contributions to rock music as a member of The Small Faces, Faces and as a solo artist, Ronnie Lane has relatively little purchase on the public imagination. Caroline and David Stafford set out to rectify that with this affectionate and ultimately affecting biography.

The authors have assiduously researched their subject. Interviews with family members, friends and former band mates illuminate the narrative. The book reveals Lane to have been a fascinating figure, at once a seeker and someone with a large appetite for earthly pleasures. He was also until the onset of multiple sclerosis an important and prolific musician who made some of the most commercially successful and critically revered records of their era. There are many fascinating supporting characters in the story told here, some of them heroic in their support of Lane as his health declined, others villainous, foremost among them Small Faces manager Don Arden. Small Faces front man Steve Marriott comes off little better.

Anymore For Anymore has a brisk narrative, too brisk at times for the deep analysis of singles and albums that serious fans might crave. It's also disappointing that the Staffords offer no summation of Lane's legacy. Twenty-five years after his untimely death, is he of interest only to nostalgists or can his influence be heard in later generations of musicians? The book does not pose these questions, let alone answer them. It succeeds though as a tribute to an important musician and flawed but endearing human being.

Clive Webb

BRITISH INVASION '64: THE YEAR THAT CHANGED ROCK & ROLL FOREVER

Gene Popa

★★★★

BEAR MANOR MEDIA

While the exploits of The Beatles' first 14 days in the US in February 1964 – during which they unwittingly kicked down the doors and paved the way for what would become known as The British Invasion – have been the subject of intense study, the stories of the countless bands that followed them across the Atlantic that year, and the influence they would exert on the American music scene, has been less chronicled (Barry Miles' excellent 2009 tome *The British Invasion* being the notable exception).

Popa's 60-year hindsight book promises to cover "all of the excitement and mania from opening note to final chord". Acker Bilk's 'Stranger On The Shore' may have topped the US chart in '62 but it wasn't until The Rolling Stones, Animals, Manfred Mann, Dave Clark Five, Kinks, Hollies *et al* stormed the castle that British music became a force to be reckoned with.

The first few chapters outline the circumstances that enabled The Beatles' monumental impact as the US and UK rock scenes rumbled to life. There follows a loosely chronological dash through the year as various Brit combos attempted to conquer America, often with recordings of US songs ('Go Now' and 'Do Wah Diddy Diddy' both hit #1 stateside), and the US's response from Motown to folk-rock. Along the way we meet wide-eyed teenage fans, unscrupulous promoters, merchandising exploitation run amok, and a whole heap of dreams dashed on the (Plymouth) rocks.

Popa's writing evokes the time and place, and is fact-heavy yet without succumbing to Wiki-style tedium, remaining bright and informed throughout.

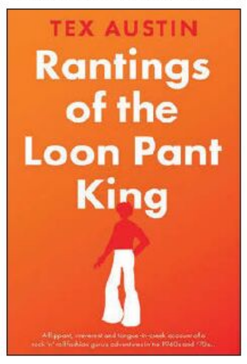
Andy Morten

RANTINGS OF THE LOON PANT KING

Tex Austin

★★★★

THE BOOK GUILD LTD



In the mid-60s, Craig Austin (these days known as Tex) was lead vocalist for Lincolnshire beat combo The Dimples. They made a one-off 45 for Decca in 1966 but it went nowhere – the group felt they were forced into recording more pop-orientated material than they'd have liked. They splintered not long afterwards, with Tex and one or two others staying a while longer, journeying to gigs in Denmark and France. In London, they embraced the new psychedelic wave, although their next effort Gospel Garden would be short-lived. However, after signing with Elektra, a new group emerged, Methuselah, who released an album, although only in America.

When that fizzled out, Tex turned to clothes, which had always fascinated him. In partnership with friend Zonk (Stuart) they began trading under the name Craig Stuart Fashions, making what became known as loon pants: extremely flared bell-bottom/hipster-style unisex trousers. The first batch were snapped up at the 1970 Isle Of Wight Festival and they achieved great success over the next few years selling from their Kensington Market base.

Of course, there were many ups and downs throughout the years, including a cornucopia of romantic chapters, and the music never really went away. Drawn towards conspiracy theories, Tex also likes a good rant, hence the title, but there's much to enjoy within the pages of this engaging, conversational book which, at times, will also have you in stitches.

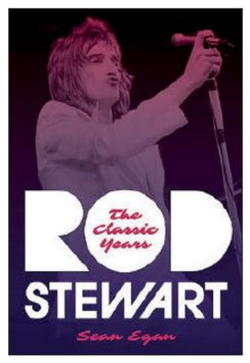
Lenny Helsing

ROD STEWART: THE CLASSIC YEARS

Sean Egan

★★★★

BACKBEAT



Sean Egan has a substantial obstacle to overcome with this book. For some readers, it's hard to take Rod Stewart seriously. The playboy tax exile, the prancing around in tight leopard skin trousers to disco anthem 'Da Ya Think I'm Sexy': he was the reason why punk had to happen.

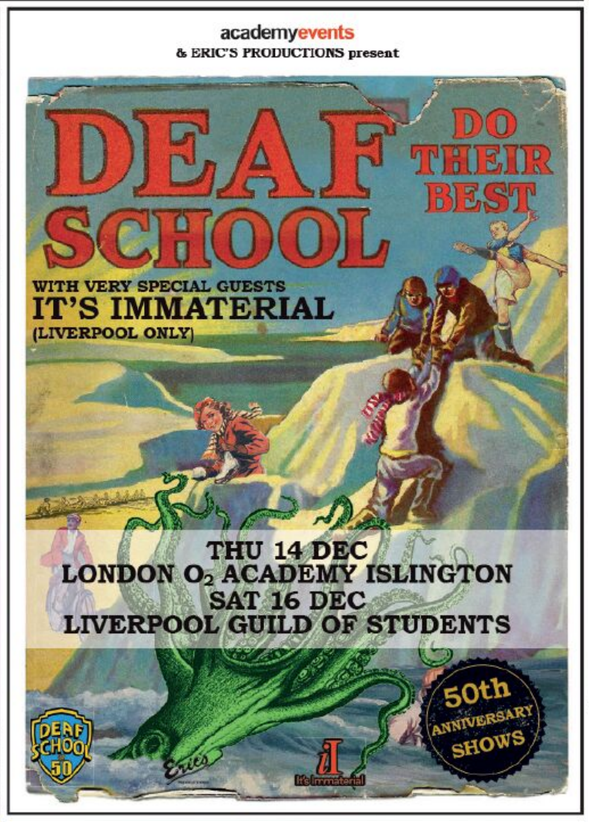
So, it's testimony to the strength of this book that it so persuasively recovers Stewart as an important artist. Egan focuses on the era from *An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down* in 1969 to *Tonight I'm Yours* in '81. One could argue that the rot had started to set in by the time Stewart released *Blondes Have More Fun* in '78 but Egan makes a convincing case that there is merit in his later output. He provides comprehensive song-by-song analysis of the albums Stewart recorded both as a solo artist and as front man of The Faces, including not only his own evaluations but also contemporary and retrospective press reviews. The book also gives proper due to the other musicians, songwriters and producers who contributed to the making of the records.

The focus of the book is on the music more than the man. But Egan does rescue Stewart from the caricature of some media reporting, showing him to be someone who both pandered to and confounded his public image. His refusal to play solo shows while still a member of The Faces, for instance, suggests an under-appreciated selflessness.

Encyclopaedic in knowledge yet sprightly in tone, this is an engaging read for even the deepest sceptic.

Clive Webb

Academy Events present



TICKETMASTER.CO.UK

The Hives' Pelle Almqvist takes flight
PHOTO: JEFF PITCHER

Tchotchke. "Ladies Night never sounded so good"
PHOTO: TESS CARGES

Los Dug Dug's leader Armando Nava
PHOTO: GEORGE L BLOSSER

THE HIVES
PRYZM, Kingston upon Thames,
TUESDAY 6TH JUNE

"Ladies and gentlemen of Kingston! We are The Hives. This is our first time in Kingston. It feels very special to be here, in the birthplace of reggae music. Pretty sure this is where UB40 invented it!" Hives singer Pelle Almqvist is wildly funny in at least three languages, exuberant, playfully egotistical, and jaw-droppingly energetic. Since 1993, he's staked a claim to be the world's greatest front man, and, while he lacks the sly danger of Iggy, he's probably in the top two. The rest of the band match his nimbleness with theatrical stops, stiletto-sharp judders and guitar playing far, far more clever than the garage stylings their music might initially suggest.

It's been a long wait for a new Hives album, "One thousand years of war, a plague and two famines," as Pelle reminds us. Yet the band have come out of the traps fresher and keener than ever. The new material more than matches old favourites; new(ish) single 'Bogus Operandi' opens proceedings, and spanking fresh track 'Countdown To Shutdown' is greeted with cheers.

This small-ish show is a "rest" day from the band's stadia tour with Arctic Monkeys – the giant HIVES letters are crammed onto the relatively teeny stage – and the group's joy at getting back to playing to their core fans is evident. During old favourite 'Hate To Say I Told You So', a stripling fan, dressed in full Hives drag crowd-surfs to the stage, is given the bass, and plays the song note-perfect; topping it off with backing vocals and a fist pump, and even the well-seasoned band shake their heads and grin.

Razor-edged, with a treasure chest of super-pop hits, but still hungry to loot more, The Hives feel like a band on the crest of a renaissance, ready with the chutzpah and licks to finally take their place as a headline festival act. They are, as Pelle says, "The champagne of bands; remember, it's not the champagne of bands if it's not from the Fagerstra region of Sweden. It's just sparkling rock 'n' roll."

Kate Hodges

DOG DAY AFTERNOON
Crystal Palace Park, London
SATURDAY 1ST JULY

As punks old and new descended on South London's Crystal Palace, anticipation for one of the best bills of the year is high. Today is a celebration of the crème de la crème of the British and American '70s punk scene featuring Blondie, Buzzcocks, a couple of Sex Pistols and of course the second lizard king himself, Iggy Pop.

With early starts for The Lambrini Girls and a Steve Diggle-led Buzzcocks, it's quite the punk carnival. Entering the arena to hear the tail-end of Stiff Little Fingers' 'Suspect Device', we await the arrival of punk supergroup Generation Sex, and when the opening fanfare of 'Pretty Vacant' rings out we know we will not be disappointed. Fresh from their turn at Glastonbury, Pistols Steve Jones and Paul Cook, coupled with Generation X's Tony James and Billy Idol, bomb through well-worn faves by both bands including 'Dancing With Myself', 'God Save The Queen' and the still highly-charged 'Bodies'; Idol does a decent enough job covering for Lydon and the crowd loving the singalong.

Next up is Blondie, celebrating Debbie Harry's 78th birthday and the last date of their current tour. Featuring the only other original member from the CBGB's days Clem Burke (still shit-hot on drums) and ex-Pistol Glen Matlock on bass, this is an impeccable greatest hits set. With Harry remaining the aloof-yet-enticing chief, classic followed classic as they segue from 'One Way Or Another' to 'Hanging On The Telephone', 'The Tide Is High', 'Atomic', 'Rapture', eventually rounding off with 'Dreaming'. Then it's time for The Ig.

At 76, expectations are measured, but this is a bravura performance from the Detroit imp – shirtless, flipping the bird, every bit the swaggering master of punk as he governs the stage. This kind of defiance in a septuagenarian may sound questionable, but there is no sense of parody here – this is a complete performance. It didn't hurt either that the set was sublime – leaning heavily on The Stooges and his late '70s Bowie era. Opening with little-known track 'Five Foot One', he seques straight into Stooges' 'TV Eye' and with only the briefest of nods to latest album *Every Loser*, this is a storming set of dyed-in-the-wool masterpieces: 'Raw Power', 'Gimme Danger', 'Search And Destroy', 'The Passenger', 'Lust For Life'. Surrounded by a camp of great musicians who give these songs added gravitas, the inclusion of horns in particular is a masterstroke. The hypnotic, woozy guitar of 'Mass Production' kicks off the encore, followed by the glorious sleaze of 'Nightclubbing' and two *Fun House* corkers. Signing off with new song 'Frenzy', this is a triumph. Every dog has his day.

Sarah Gregory

LOS DUG DUG'S
Hi-Dive, Denver, Colorado
SUNDAY 23RD JUNE

Billed on the venue's poster as "Mexican psych legends", Los Dug Dug's recently made their Colorado debut some six decades into their career. Originally formed in the early '60s in Durango, Mexico by singer/multi-instrumentalist Armando Nava, the group found fame as the first in the country to cover The Beatles. After several singles and line-up changes the band began the creative run that cemented its reputation, releasing four classic LPs between 1971 and '78. Now they're being discovered by a new generation as their songs soundtrack the chaotic world of Mexican drug trafficking in *Narcos*.

It's tracks from their '70s run that enthral the audience tonight. While his backing band hold down the groove on drums, bass

"Razor-edged, with a treasure chest of super-pop hits, but still hungry to loot more, The Hives feel like a band on the crest of a renaissance"

Iggy goes to the dogs
PHOTO: VICTOR FRANKOWSKI

and rhythm guitar, sole original member Armando – now in his late 70s, and rocking as hard as someone a third his age – switches between delivering blistering solos on Flying V, trademark excursions on flute and tasteful licks on a mini-Korg.

The highlights pour by, and fans of the first LP are delighted by pounding versions of 'Lost In My World' and 'Eclipse'. Second LP *Smog* is represented by an explosive take on the title track, the flute solo taking the crowd on a breathy trip into krautrock territory. The intensely heavy riffage of 'Cambia Cambia' provides the opportunity for some good old fashioned headbanging and '76 B-side 'Let Me Breath' is an unexpected delight. Even a broken guitar string during the epic 'Let's Make It Now' doesn't halt proceedings, the extended drum solo providing the perfect opportunity to replace it so that the full band can crash back in and end the show on a high note.

Andrew Ure

TCHOTCHKE
The Echo, Los Angeles
WEDNESDAY 28TH JUNE

The Echo is packed. Although it takes a moment for Tchotchke to settle in and properly rattle us, once the LA trio plays 'Ronnie,' we're riotous. Anastasia Sanchez – drums and lead vocals – would do most '60s girl-groups proud with her pseudo-whine-turned-roar and permanent snarl. Her Mary Weiss voice battles with her dynamic drumming; it's a feat comparable to a piano-stomping Fiona Apple. On guitar, Emily Tooraen shreds and shreds some more. Her melodic instincts are sharp and she fills every void left in Sanchez's wake. Eva Chambers plays a groovy bass, finding harmonies where other bassists might not.

They play the hits from their self-titled album with gusto, including a sped-up 'Dizzy' that lives up to its name. Sanchez introduces 'Wish You Were A Girl' as "a song for the ladies... for the dolls". After enthusiastic applause, she punctures our glee. "It's a really sad song, you guys." As our only chit-chat for the evening, it's clear Tchotchke isn't messing around. The trio refuses any glimmer of sentimentality: no cloying, no preening. Ladies Night never sounded so good.

Though a Shangri-Las cover might have ended world suffering, we get a wonderful cover of The Tammys' 'Egyptian Shumba' instead. Sanchez's shrieks are pitch-perfect, while Tooraen and Chambers perform thrilling back-up to the hilariously odd tune. The show ends with an electric cover of The Quick's 'No No Girl' that cements Tchotchke's pop-rock capabilities and leaves us wanting more.

Tess Carges

SALTAIRE SHAKEDOWN
Caroline Street Social Club, Saltaire, West Yorkshire
FRIDAY 30TH JUNE

Welcome to the hidden gem of the north, aka Saltaire Shakedown, lovingly realised by Chris and Pete of The Razerbills. From beginning to end, The Shakedown provides a fully immersive experience; lowbrow artwork adorns the stage, dance contests, raffles, comparing, top deejays, and a top pick of bands.

The night gives more than a cheeky wee nod to the spirit of The Frat Shack or Wild Weekend. Pretensions are left at the door, and the emphasis is on fun, helped along by a cheap bar. Local deejay Bob Stanley (St Etienne) spins salubrious '60s sounds to match the nostalgic vibe, warming up the busy venue. The stage is resplendent with golden curtains, providing a complimentary backdrop for the first band The Mandelbrot Shakes. This double-trouble duo pulls no punches. Songs like 'You Better Run' echo raw rock 'n' roll blues. 'Siren', a haunting surf instro, allows singer and drummer Letty Wells (Dagger Debs) to wail as a woman absolutely should. Following a dance contest interlude Manchester's full-tilt five-piece Thee Windom Earles serve up "sexy hot trash" ™. On the cusp of releasing their second album, they unleash an unrelenting sound (think The Sonics, Hasil Adkins and Link Wray in a blender). Only the Earles could make chips-based ditty 'Lunchtime Munchtime' sound both erotic and mucky. Shell Vira keeps the fellas in check with her fuzzy and unshakeable basslines, and with three guitars, drums, organ, and at least 20 pedals, they are one huge gyrating monster.

Debbie Sheringham

THE MELVINS
The Garage, Glasgow
THURSDAY 1ST JUNE

Who would ever have thought the Pacific Northwest's great outsiders would ever get to celebrate their 40th anniversary as a recording and touring act? But here they are to do just that, and with style.

Things get off to a surprisingly upbeat start as the trio's walk-on music – A-Ha's 'Take On Me' –accompanies their arrival onstage. And what a sight they are. Guitarist and frontman Buzz Osborne with his gravity-defying hair looking like some kind of latter-day druid in his flowing gown emblazoned with the all-seeing eye, bassist Steve McDonald of Redd Kross – a wild-eyed vision in scarlet and gold in his martial arts suit – and drummer Dale Crover a dead ringer for the very definition of a small-town greaser.

When they crank up their lumbering grunge bombast it's unforgivingly loud and bludgeoningly powerful. The opening salvo of oldies 'Snake Appeal', 'Zodiac' and 'Copache' fly by in a blur before an almost unrecognisable reconstruction of The Beatles' 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' is bruising the eardrums of the highly expectant crowd.

Moral of the story: expect the unexpected. In a show which revisits landmarks from across the breadth of The Melvins' expansive discography. At the end of it all, you're left reflecting how incredibly energised they remain for band that has been resolutely following their own path for a mind-bending 40 years. Clearly there's a lot to be said for never even thinking about compromising

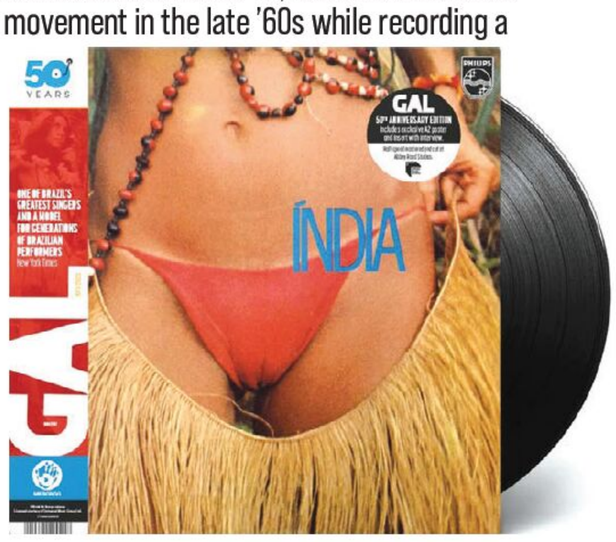
Grahame Bent

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

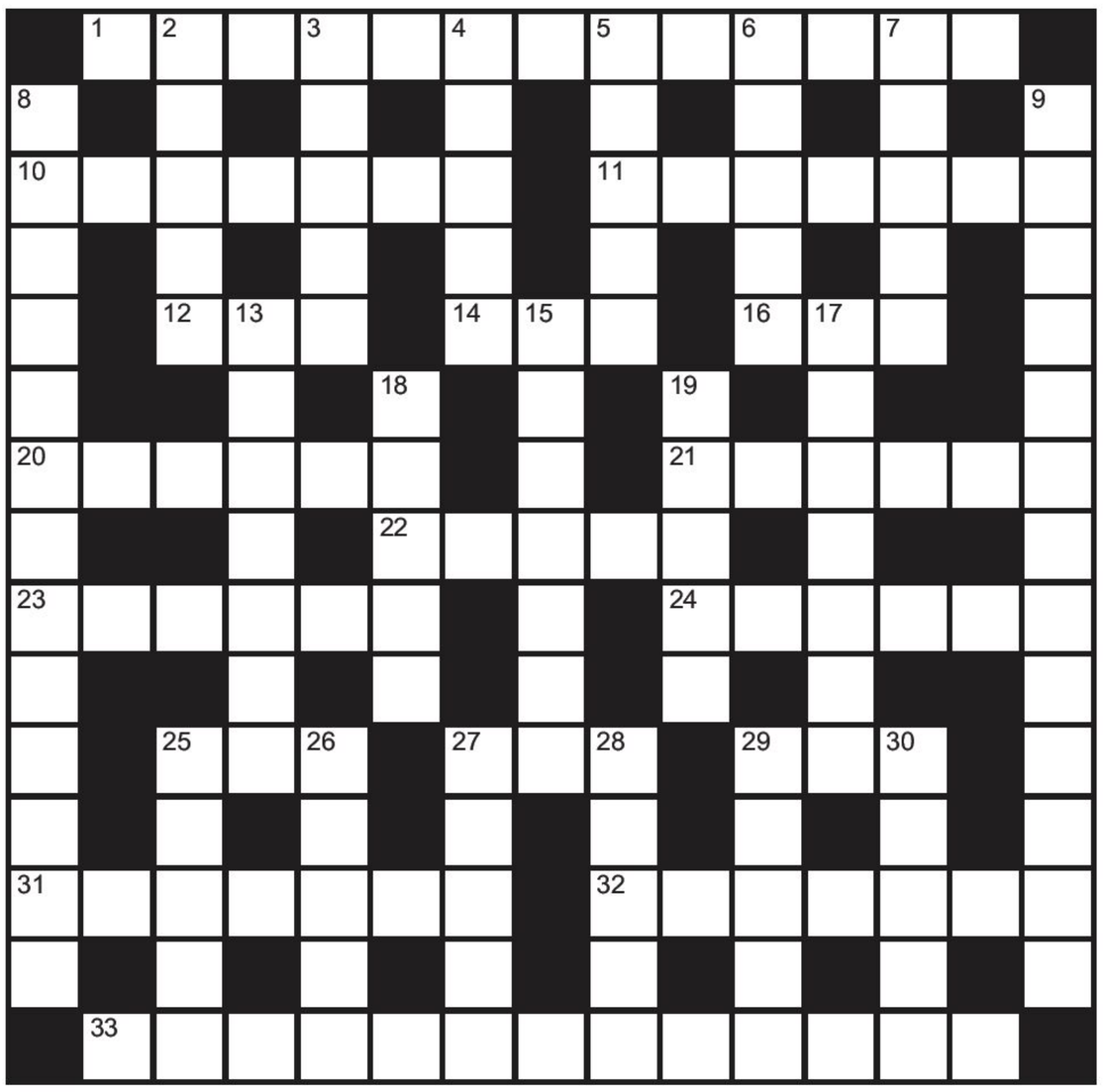
Prize Crossword

by Stuart Draper

The passing of **GAL COSTA** in November 2022 robbed us of a singular, volatile, influential voice. Emerging from the hotbed of Brazilian talent that also included Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso and Tom Zé, Gal became a figurehead of the tropicália movement in the late '60s while recording a string of albums that reached something of a creative apex on 1973's ***Índia***. Newly reissued by the Mr Bongo label, it sounds as masterly and subservise as ever (the cover art alone was enough to guarantee it got banned at the time). And we have a copy to give away.



To enter, simply send your completed crossword to *Shindig!* #142 Crossword, 40 Windsor Crescent, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EA or email a legible scan of it to win@shindig-magazine.com with the words "S! #142 crossword competition" in the subject line, no later than 7th September. And don't forget to include your name and address!



Across

1 Hipgnosis-covered and Gilmour-produced, Unicorn swirl acronyms too, OK? (3,4,6)
10 Heated first numbers, as The Standells state no ethos in error (3,4)
11 Stupidly I rub ape with Lula Côrtes and Zé Ramalho, yet was largely lost in the flood (7)
12 I am also you at heart, it's the last word on Acro Iris's debut (3)
14 With a core of disease, train follows to form Marin County band, album, lead track (3)
16 This all-female Sacramento band mostly shed The Id (3)
20 The Gypsies' flip for hydroxide female (2,4)
21 Covered by The Remains and Alex Chilton, this rich tune commences at the capital and ends in a Cambridgeshire city before the weekend(s) (6)
22 Loose libel ahead of your mirror with Nico and co (3,2)
23 Macaroni cheese loses American, stirs to start Gene Clark's debut (6)
24 Wild ratios where you'd find 31 Across (6)
25 Initial delusions of grandeur yes, but Cat loves his (3)
27 Semi-shoddy start to The Abstracts' clown (1,1,1)
29 Q65 reverse, half-banned (3)
31 Stubbs' sale items that Flower Travellin' Band didn't know about (7)
32 Cohesively forfeits 12 Across, turns to The Ides of March LP (7)
33 Any car fiddler bizarrely ends The Alan Parsons Project once they've made the turn of (1,8,4)

Down

2 Hall and this John, he's tomatoes without Tom (5)
3 My one recollection of this Kevin Ayers single is his need to repeat himself (5)
4 Noises blows off Electric Prunes song, it's tricky for Elephant's Memory (5)
5 Direction within car park attendant provides vessel to have a tea with The Kinks (5)
6 Norwegians with grain deficit conclude Melvins' naturally-acting Buck (5)
7 Bizarre if Ken gives temporary cutlery to TS Bonniwell (5)
8 After a quick one, he lets out howl improperly (3,3,4,3)
9 Underpass flowers, toxic to cats, found on the album in 1 Across in the last issue (it's just there, bottom right of this page) (6,7)
13 Corporation refuses part, organises remains for lead singer of SW19 environmentalists (7)
15 Disentangle ties from entangled disentangle, you'll find Manchester's location with Hair (7)
17 The Soup Dragons serve death sentence on double figures, just about (4,3)
18 Herbalists haven't heart for former sect members (5)
19 Hitchcock and Buck slightly shuffle seats to get to No 1 flexibly (5)
25 Burdon band in Duty Free could be short LP from Walkingseeds Sensory Deprivation Chamber Quartet (5)
26 Cut from energy as image, this glam exponent is pronounced Jah-See, as they recently told us (5)
27 Once a reshuffle occurs, here's a 1969 band derived from The Family Of Apostolic, reissued by Lollipop Shop in 2020 (5)
28 Lived backwards stops Stones' sympathy (5)
29 Abbreviated addition of German wine makes an unplanned track with Randy Pie (2,3)
30 Too bad it's left notice board, what could be the end for Gilbert O'Sullivan (5)

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Issue 141 crossword solution

1 L	2 O	V	3 E	Y	4 O	U	5 R	E	6 N	E	7 M	I	8 E	S
	L		X		L		H		Y		U		M	
9 I	D	I	O	T	S		O		10 M	A	D	A	M	E
	W		T		11 O	W	N	U	P		F		A	
12 V	I	S	I	O	N		D		13 H	E	L	P	M	E
	N		C			14 C	A	T			A		A	
15 I	D	I	O	T	16 S				17 Z	E	P	H	Y	R
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19 F	I	L	20 T	H	Y				21 O	R	22 I	G	I	N
	L		E			23 S	24 I	X			N		N	
25 S	L	A	L	O	26 M		A		27 B	O	D	E	G	A
	T		A		28 E	N	N	U	I		I		S	
29 T	R	A	V	E	L		K		30 B	E	A	U	T	Y
	E		I		O		A		L		N		O	
31 H	E	A	V	E	N	L	Y	P	E	R	S	O	N	A

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New Distractions

by Dream Phases - NER-048

Emerging from the City of Angels' neo-psychedelic rock scene in 2017, Dream Phases reflects Calfornia's natural splendor and adventuresome inner spirit in its music.

The earthy-yet-exalted sounds of the Byrds, the Beach Boys and Crosby, Stills, Nash ,Young – as well as latter-dayartists like the Rain Parade, Elliott Smith and Autolux – figure into the band's family tree. Whilethis lineage is worth noting, what comes through in the band's latest work is an individual approach that translates the experiences of its members into something undeniably compelling.

First track to last, you can hear this vitality in New Distractions, Dream Phases' sophomore album.

Vinyl LP, Cassette, CD
available through Nomad Eel Records

EXCLUSIVE RELEASES

Hold Drugs Dear

By R.J. Bloke - NER-049

Hold Drugs Dear is a dynamic solo effort from RJ Bloke, front man & songwriter for Los Angeles based alt-country, americana, roots rock quartet Patrolled By Radar.

These warm and urgent analog recordings feature an array of stellar guests including Alex Moore, Spencer Livingston (Livingmore), Eli Wulfmeier (Leroy from the North), Peter Curry (Los Straitjackets, Nick Lowe), and Davey Allen (Eric Burdon, Davey & The Midnights).

This collection of well-crafted poetic and melodic songs are sure to appeal to fans of Dylan, Ray Davies, Jeff Tweedy, Lennon & Paul McCartney and many more, truly magificent.

Vinyl LP, Cassette, CD
available through Nomad Eel Records

Claire Hamill

Stage Door Johnnies

KONK, UK, 1974

PHOTOGRAPHY: MONTY COLES, DESIGN AND ARTWORK: DICK WARD, DESIGN CONCEPT: JB MCCOY

No flowers or chocolates today. **CHRIS GROOM** finds sadness behind the dressing room door

Once the curtain has come down, the audience has left the building and the euphoria of the evening performance starts to subside, the backstage dressing room can be a very lonely place. Particularly for a woman. It may be a generalisation, but time was when only the guys in the band got the groupies. As Janis Joplin famously told *The New Yorker* in August 1971, "On stage, I make love to 25,000 different people, then I go home alone."

There are elements of that thinking in the cover for Claire Hamill's *Stage Door Johnnies*, even though Hamill's title track harks back to the music hall days when top-hatted suitors would turn up armed with bouquets and declaring their undying love. Here, surrounded by the trappings of her performing persona, Claire is pictured deep in thought, perhaps contemplating yet another post-gig meal for one. As her lyric states, "Whatever happened to the stage door Johnnies / I miss the champagne parties and the flowers / Instead of entertaining like I used to in those days / I just sit in my dressing room alone for hours." It is the absence of any potential paramour in this cover shot that tells the real story.

After two impressive albums for Island, this was her first for the newly formed Konk Records, the pet project of The Kinks' Ray and Dave Davies. Incredibly, Hamill was still barely 21, with a song-writing maturity well beyond her years and, having toured the USA with Jethro Tull and Procol Harum, she was now starting to test her voice and indulge in the requisite habits of the rock 'n' roll diva.

Konk hired British-born fashion photographer Monty Coles for the shoot, whose career as a "smudger" happened almost by accident. Working as a Wall Street financier by day, while partying in the New York nightclubs he decided to try his hand as an agent for a model agency. This led to a spell as a photographers' assistant and the lucky break of a '67 assignment with Twiggy and Justin de Villeneuve in Tokyo helped establish his name on the other side of the camera.

Despite the occasional record sleeve, Coles was working regularly for *Honey* and *Petticoat* magazines and his shoot for *Stage Door Johnnies* is pure fashion spread. Hiring The Queens Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue for the cover and Bentleys restaurant in Piccadilly for the reverse, the liner notes include credits for clothes, hair and make-up.

"The clothes, including the kimono I'm wearing on the cover, were supplied by a chap called Johnny Rocker who owned a vintage shop in New Row, Covent Garden," remembers Hamill. "He also agreed to take part – he's the very fey, Noel Coward-looking character staring off into the distance. The other guys (pictured waiting patiently by the stage door on the inner gatefold) were actors and models. I couldn't rustle up any degenerate musicians to stand in for the shoot!" Even the celebratory meal on the back cover was not all it seems, as Hamill recalls. "The restaurant agreed to leave a table uncleared, so it looked like we'd had a big meal, but we didn't get a thing to eat – the production costs wouldn't stretch that far!"

Alongside her brilliant take on Michael Murphy's 'Geronimo's Cadillac' and a defiant 'We Gotta Get Out Of This Place', the album contains the original recording of 'You Take My Breath Away', the glowing ballad that gained Hamill a new following in 2003 when it was unexpectedly covered by Eva Cassidy.

Monty Coles moved on to greater success during the '80s, working with Anna Wintour on *Vogue* and producing cover shots and fashion plates for its British and Australian editions. Now resident in Australia, Coles works as an adjunct professor at RMIT University, Melbourne. S!

"The restaurant agreed to leave a table uncleared, so it looked like we'd had a big meal, but we didn't get a thing to eat – the production costs wouldn't stretch that far!"

Thanks to Claire Hamill for her assistance

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vinyl clicks

In which **MICHAEL BJÖRN** investigates worthy albums that have somehow eluded reissue, compilation or acclaim

BRIAN ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

Wringing Applause

(Ardent, USA, 1973)

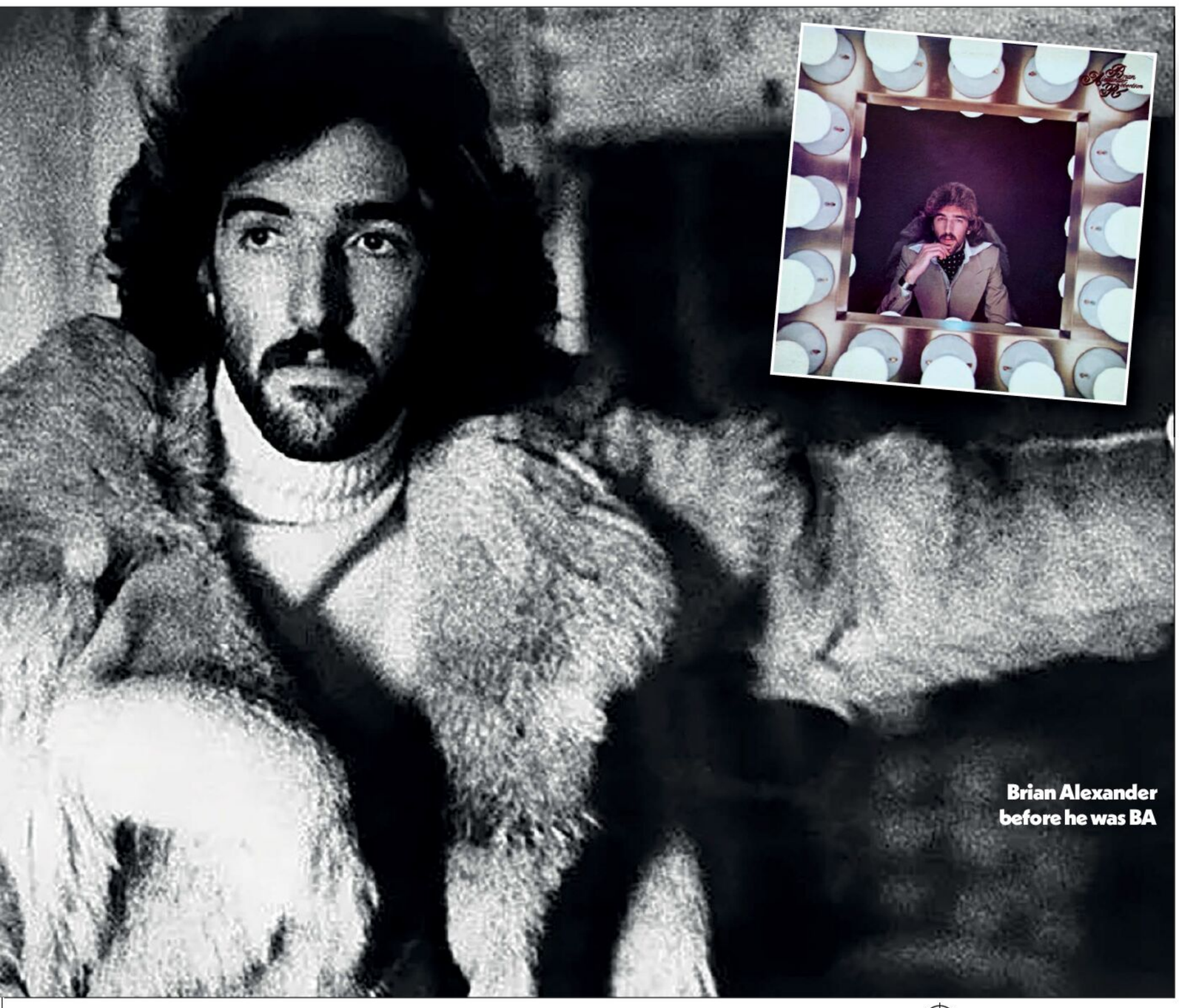
Ardent Records famously released Big Star's *#1 Record* in1973. Their next album was by Scotsman Brian Alexander Robertson, who would eventually become famous as BA Robertson when his '79 single 'Bang Bang' reached #2 in the UK charts, followed by two more Top 10 hits. But despite top-notch theatrical pop with dramatic songwriting and animated vocals, sounding almost like Peter Gabriel had gone solo after *Foxtrot*, debut *Wringing Applause* only attracated a *DownBeat* magazine nomination for most overlooked album.

Robertson met former Eclection member and future Sailor founder Georg Kajanus through artist and TV presenter Jonathon Coudrille. "Brian and I became friends and we also shared a publisher, EH Morris," remembers Kajanus. "Brian became the non-paying lodger at 26 Clifton Villas, London, where I was living at that time with my first wife, during the rehearsals of his songs and vocals." Demos were made and sent around. John Peel was impressed and heard the influence of Peter Hammill. "I was more than happy for him to inherit my former delivery job at Panzer's Deli in Notting Hill Gate," he continues. "He was offered a recording deal with Ardent Records a couple of months later."

Apart from working with Big Star, Ardent's Terry Manning often visited London, and had among other things engineered *Led Zeppelin III*. A deal was made and Terry would help record the album. "Brian invited me to produce his album at Morgan Studios in London," says Kajanus. Barry Morgan played drums and Herbie Flowers was on bass. "There were no written scores for anything," continues Kajanus. "It's possible that a lot of what they contributed was improvised, as well as following Brian's and my ideas." Although aged only 21, Robertson remained undaunted by the industry heavyweights and fulfilled his stage actor approach. "Brian was a driven and very ambitious individual who already knew what direction he wanted to go in, although he was often filled with questions about whether he was going over the top."

Adding to the theatrical feel, instruments frequently become sonic stage props. And on 'In The Limelight' clattering sounds build atmosphere. "I managed to get hold of half a dozen metal trays from the Morgan Studios kitchen," remembers Kajanus. "We put a couple of mics on the long stairs going up to the studio control room and then threw the trays downstairs."

They then flew to the USA. "We finished additional overdubs and mixed the album at the legendary Ardent Studios in Memphis. Also, one of the most emotional songs, 'To My Star', was recorded and mixed there." says Kajanus. "It was quite surreal to be completing an album of such European sensibilities in such an overtly American environment." Terry's wife Carole provided artwork, as she had for *#1 Record*, but whereas that record became a giant of cult rock history, *Wringing Applause* received no standing ovations.



Brian Alexander before he was BA

get a **buz**

The Monthly Qobuz *Shindig!* Playlist

JON 'MOJO' MILLS reminds readers why subscribing to **QOBUZ** is certainly something to budget for

Don't forget that along with our "new issue playlist" (accessible by the widget on shindig-magazine.com) there is also the unique themed or genre-based playlist that we create for qobuz.com each month too. Take out a free trial to sample the delights of the platform's hi-res and lossless streaming, and for serious audiophiles the hi-res download store. Not only can you enjoy our content, but there is also all manner of other things of interest specific to Qobuz, like the Listening With... The Lemon Twigs playlist and an absolutely vast History Of Ace Records list to boot.

Our "monthly playlists" have taken in progressive folk, brassy girl sounds, European jazzy and soulful rock, US country-rock, and more recently a humongous list of KPM library music, culled from the evolutionary period of 1967-78.

Ahead of next issue's KPM story, here's the thinking behind my near three-hour selection, which can be found on Qobuz by searching "KPM Records" under the platform's "playlist" tab. Whilst the KPM "Greensleeves" offer a fantastic variety of music, much groovy, due to being a TV and film library there's a lot of mood music and MOR fare that may not appeal. Titled "An Evolution In British Library Music" the list aims to chart the change in pop music fashion from Hammond-laced '60s pounders through to the more progressive and experimental styles that began to appear and expand as the '70s took hold. Starting fuzzy and heavy, the selection then moves into drifting pastoral themes to jazzy rock, funk and the experimental, marked by the advent of synthesisers.

The list will make a perfect accompaniment to Johnnie Johnstone's article in the next issue, so do sign up to Qobuz and bookmark this one.

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NIGHT BEATS
“RAJAN”
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Landing somewhere between Spaghetti Western film score and psych-pop opus, ‘Rajan’ is the career-defining new album from Night Beats.

“Brimming with the kind of joy that sharing your favourite sounds with others brings… Rajan is a far-reaching depiction of Night Beats’ musical psyche.” Shindig Magazine

“Rajan is the sound of an artist who delights in the purest sense of freedom.” Louder Than War

“Rajan successfully bridges vintage influences into the best of modern psychedelia, resulting in the most precise and mature Night Beats album to date.” Exclaim!

THE MEN
“NEW YORK CITY”
OUT NOW – LP/CD/DL

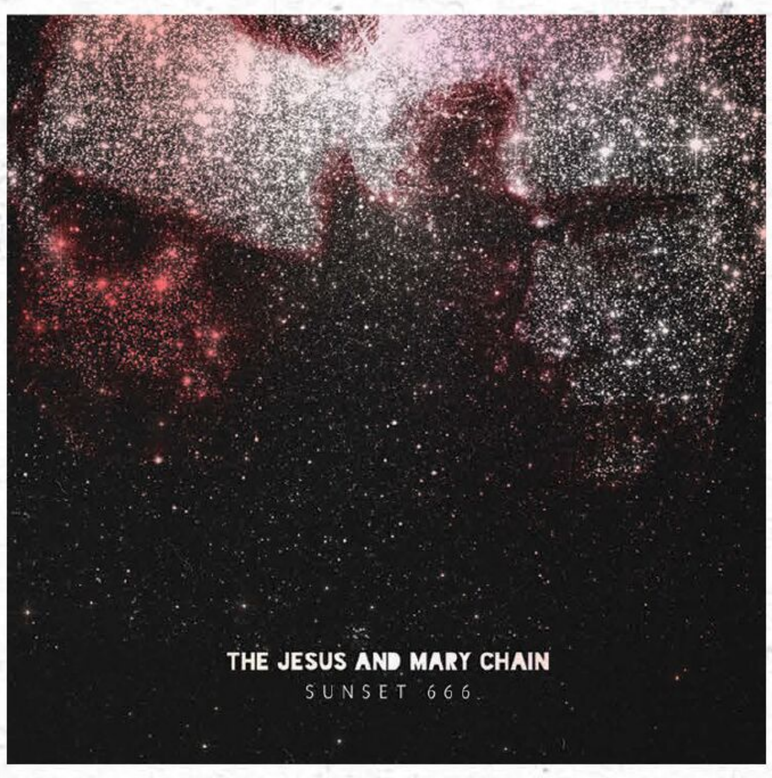
Prolific Brooklyn institution The Men return with their ninth studio album, ‘New York City’.

“A blazing full-length of proto-punk stompers built on a live and raw rock and roll sound.”
Bandcamp Daily

“An unpretentious garage-punk racket… the album’s sheer boisterousness is a joy.” Pitchfork

“A ferocious album that keeps the needle buried in the red.” Paste Magazine

"New York City is an absolute blast."
Shindig Magazine
★★★★★



THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN
“SUNSET 666”
OUT 4/8 – 2LP/CD/DL

Recorded at the Hollywood Palladium, Los Angeles in 2018, ‘Sunset 666’ is a new live album from The Jesus and Mary Chain recorded when the Reid brothers toured the US with Nine Inch Nails.

Captured straight from the desk over two nights, the discography-spanning 2LP includes tracks from ‘Psychocandy’, ‘Darklands’, ‘Automatic’, ‘Stoned & Dethroned’, ‘Munki’, ‘Honey’s Dead’, ‘Some Candy Talking’ and ‘Damage and Joy’.

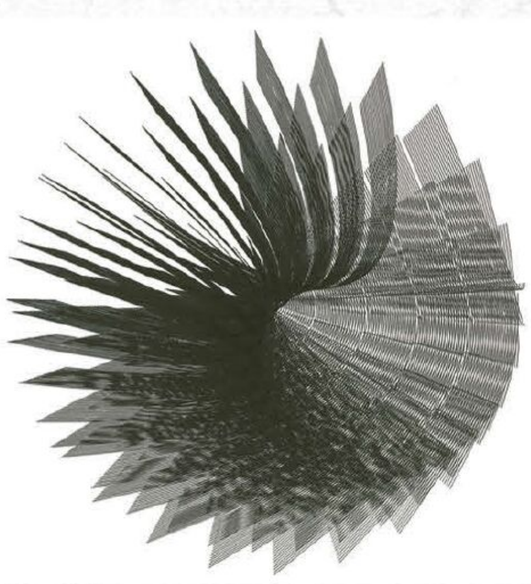
‘Sunset 666’ sees the Mary Chain deliver a set of classics with a composed intensity that shows these songs are as alive and powerful as they've ever been.

HELICON
“GOD INTENTIONS”
OUT NOW – LP/DL

MOONWALKS
“WESTERN MYSTERY TRADITION”
OUT NOW – LP/DL

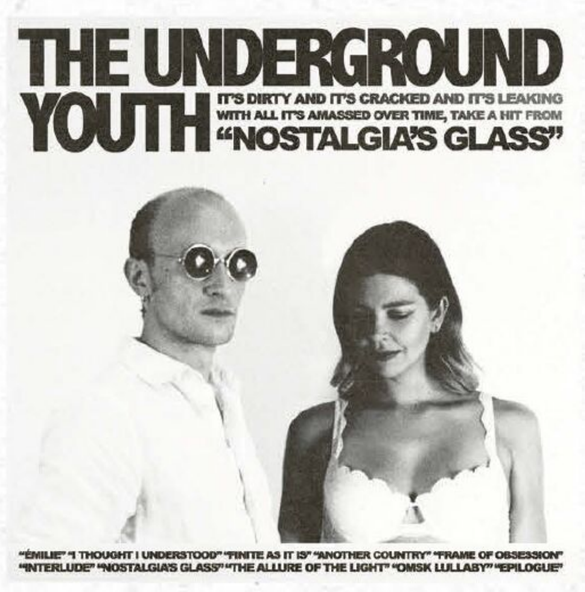
THE BLACK DELTA MOVEMENT
“RECOVERY EFFECTS”
OUT NOW – LP/CD/DL

GOLDEN HOURS
“GOLDEN HOURS”
OUT NOW – LP/DL



THROW DOWN BONES
“THREE”
OUT NOW – LP/DL

THE MEN
“FUZZ CLUB SESSION”
OUT NOW – 2LP/DL



THE UNDERGROUND YOUTH
“NOSTALGIA’S GLASS”
OUT 18/8 – LP/CD/DL

DAIISTAR
“GOOD TIME”
OUT 8/9 – LP/CD/DL

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